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FAMOUS CRIMES

PAST AND PRESENT

ONE · PENNY

THE MURDER OF RIZZIO.

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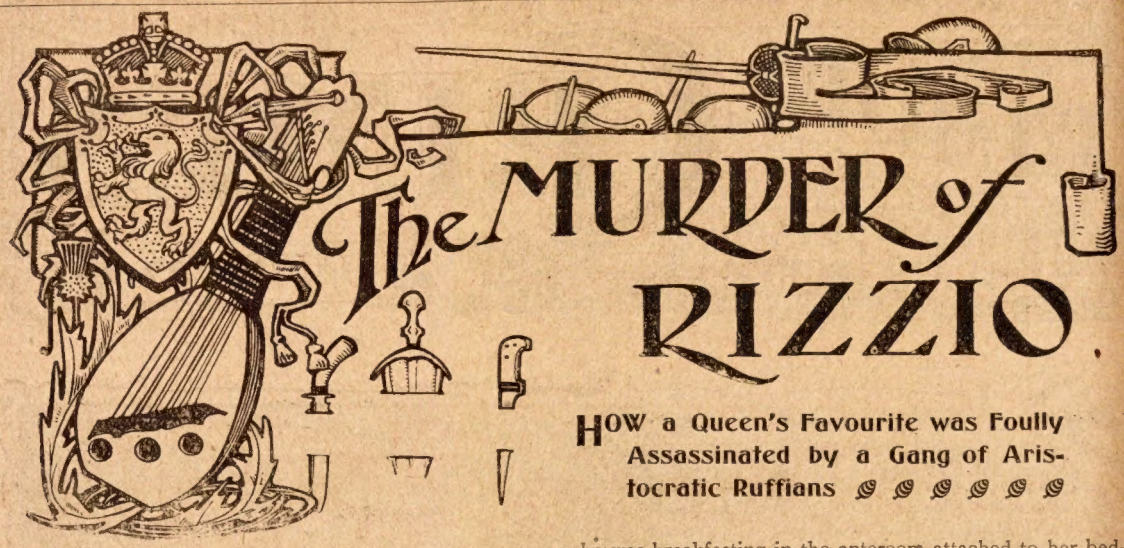


The MURDER of RIZZIO.

HOW a Queen's Favourite was Foully Assassinated by a Gang of Aristocratic Ruffians

"She tho't of all her blighted hopes, the dreams of youth's brief day,
And summoned Rizzio with his lute, and bade the minstrel play
The songs she loved in other years, the songs of gay Navarre,
The songs, perchance, that erst were sung by gallant Chatelar;
They half beguiled her of her cares, they soothed her into smiles,
They won her tho'ts from bigot zeal, and fierce domestic broils.
But hark! the tramp of armed men! the Douglas battle-cry!
They come, they come! and lo, the scowl of Ruthven's hollow eye!
Stern swords are drawn, and daggers gleam; her words, her prayers are vain;
The ruffian steel is in his heart—the faithful Rizzio's slain!"

—HENRY GLASSFORD BELL.

TOWARDS the end of the year 1561, the usually dingy port of Leith, near Edinburgh, awoke from its lethargy one day, and put on as bright a smile as its lugubrious countenance was capable of. Pennons waved from every available point, and the roar of culverin awakened the echoes of lofty Arthur's Seat.

In the town was gathered the élite of the Court, with many of the citizens of the capital, all dressed in their bravest attire to welcome the Duke of Moretto, the Ambassador from Savoy. Amongst the assemblage, too, were some fathers of the Romish Church, in favour at Holyrood; but the stern-faced adherents of the new religion stood far aloof. Such frivolous work was not suited to their austere and rugged temperaments.

When the ducal messenger stepped on shore, he was followed by a long retinue of servants and attendants, all dressed in the bright Italian costume of the period, gazing about them with much curiosity at the heavy and dreary-looking buildings which contrasted so unfavourably with those of their own dear land of gaiety and sunshine.

Nevertheless, they mounted with all despatch the steeds provided for them—sorry animals they seemed to be in their eyes—and, accompanied by the gallants of the Scottish Court, and followed by an immense crowd of holiday-makers, shouting and cheering the strangers, they rode bravely on to Holyrood.

There Mary of Scotland was holding Court in what style the capital could then afford; but it was resolved that the Ambassador and his train should not be presented until the following day, as after their voyage they would require some rest. Apartments were allotted to them in the palace for the nonce, and thither they gladly betook themselves when they had been formally introduced to the Royal High Chancellor.

All that night there were busy preparations going on in the kitchens and state apartments of Holyrood, for the morrow was to witness such junketings and feastings as the walls of the palace had never yet seen. The Queen herself had issued the orders for everything to be placed before her guests in a manner befitting the high rank of the Ambassador, and in a style which would do credit to the Scottish nation.

At dawn Her Majesty was awake, and by eight o'clock she was breakfasting in the anteroom attached to her bedchamber, where later was to be enacted that terrible tragedy wherewith we are more immediately concerned. Along with her were her four Marys, her companions from infancy—Mary Beaton, Mary Seaton, Mary Livingston, and Mary Fleming. In attendance also were Madame Pinguillon and her husband, the Master of the Household.

"They tell me," said the Queen familiarly, "that the Duke of Moretto hath brought with him such musicians as have never been heard in any other Court but that of Savoy."

"Then he will have to hear our violars," replied Mary

They rode bravely on to Holyrood.

Livingston, with a smile; "for I trow he hath none better on the viol than our Dows are."

"Nor on the lute than Meikle," chimed in Mary Beaton.

"Let us not conceit ourselves too much," Her Majesty returned. "We know that these Italians have a soul for

music; yet, having heard the best musicians of France, I e'en will try a wager with the duke that he produce not a violar equal to James Dow, nor a player on the lute to match my Meikle."

"Well said, your Majesty!" exclaimed Madame Pinguillon, who stood close by the Queen's chair, and was privileged to join in the conversation; "for your people have been trained specially by yourself, than whom I have heard no better performer on the virginals in all my life. So, i' faith, my lord duke will have to look to his laurels in this respect."

The breakfast having been presently brought to an end, the Queen was assisted by her ladies in robing herself for the presentation ceremony.

No matter what the occasion, Mary, up to the time of her unfortunate marriage with Darnley, never appeared in aught save mourning.

On this occasion she chose a gown of black camlet, bordered deeply with velvet, and a small ruff of lace stiffened out beneath with buckram, her snowy bosom being left judiciously bare, so far as was compatible with taste and decorum. Upon her head was a black velvet cap, with pearls of purest lustre stitched upon the edge. Her shoes were also of velvet, laced with gold, and, so far as could be seen by any inquisitive courtier, her hose were woven of gold, silver, and silk.

By eleven Mary and her Maids of Honour were ready in the state apartments to meet the visitors. On the Queen's right stood her half-brother, Lord James Stuart, afterwards Earl of Murray, her bitterest foe. Near him was the intriguing Maitland, Secretary of State, while the Earls of Morton and Arran stood hard by. On her left were the dark-browed, bold and reckless Bothwell, with the brave and devoted Earl of Huntly, the chief of Clan Gordon, now one of her most faithful adherents, but afterwards to prove a proud and arrogant traitor, and many others.

To the brazen blare of trumpets the foreigners filed in, presenting a magnificence which threw the Scottish courtiers completely in the shade.

"They make a brave show," quoth Huntly; "but I'll wager my good clansmen with targe and claymore would soon make collops of them, for all their fine display."

"Wait till your clansmen are called upon," answered Mary Beaton quickly. "There may be sharper work for them to do at home ere long."

Gordon turned upon her swiftly.

"What work?" he asked. "God forfend that ever I should raise my hand 'gainst any but the enemies of our gracious lady."

"Tut, tut!" returned the Maid of Honour. "These are friends, not enemies."

Had Huntly but foreseen the bloody day of Corrachie, only one short year distant, he would hardly have been so confident; for on that day, driven to open rebellion by the machinations of Murray, he was to die of a broken heart amidst the utter rout of his boasted clansmen.

SUCH MUSIC AS THIS SHE HAD NEVER HEARD BEFORE.

The ceremony of presentation was soon concluded, and then the Duke of Moretto took the vacant seat by the side of the throne. Turning to him, the Queen opened the conversation with the subject which was nearest to her heart at the moment, waiving all state affairs for a future time, when her councillors should be assembled in closer conclave.

"My lord duke," she said graciously, "we hear from common report that there are in your retinue musicians of much excellence."

"Nay, madame," returned the courteous ambassador, "I have but some half-dozen fellows in my train who play at all, and these but indifferently, while the fame of your Scottish minstrels has travelled far."

"It may be so," Mary replied, "and we think we have just cause to be proud of them, yet we should much like to hear your Savoyards whose merits have been so belauded."

"First let us hear your Scotsmen, your Majesty, and then my poor performers will do their best."

"So be it," agreed the queen. "And here, my lord duke, I pledge you this Scottish pearl against the emerald on your

finger that, either on the viol or the lute, my players will prove themselves a match for yours."

The ambassador feigned to hesitate for a little. At last he turned to Mary, with a humble bow.

"Your Majesty shall be the judge," he said; "but I fear it will go hard with me."

"Nay, keep good heart," returned the Queen; "we shall be entirely just and impartial."

She then beckoned to her side a page, to whom she gave a whispered command, and in a few seconds James Dow, the chief violar, appeared.

Bending on one knee before the throne, he bowed first to Her Majesty and then to the gorgeously arrayed ambassador. He was a well-shaped fellow, this Dow, and was dressed in a philabeg of the royal tartan of the House of Stuart.

At a sign from Mary he arose, and immediately began to discourse upon his instrument.

"'Fore heaven!" exclaimed the duke at the conclusion

Assembled secretly near the Palace.

of the selection, "your Majesty must gain the day. There is not one among my men can stand against such excellence of touch."

The Queen seemed mightily pleased; but there was an ominous sparkle in the eye of the ambassador which betokened victory in the end.

"Will you not bring forward one to contend against our player?" inquired Mary, with a smile.

"That cannot I do, my lady," the duke replied. "But if your Majesty will but call forth your principal lute performer, methinks I have a man who will accept his challenge."

At a signal from the throne, Meikle, with his lute, stepped forward, and, like the previous musician, bent the knee to Her Majesty and the duke. Then, without more ado, he struck a chord upon the strings, and broke into a fantasia on the choicest airs of his native land.

While he played, the ambassador watched him narrowly, and seemed to listen intently; but when the music drew near an end, a smile gradually overspread the ducal features. It was plain that he was assured of triumph as far as the lute was concerned.

Mary, casting a glance upon him from the corner of her eye, noted the smile.

"Aha!" she thought to herself, "he hath matched me here, I trow; natheless, I have him with the viol!"

Meikle having finished, the Queen bade Moretto produce his man, whereupon the duke stood up.

"I command David Rizzio to appear before us," he exclaimed, in a loud voice.

Obedient to the order, a dark-complexioned Piedmontese marched leisurely to the front.

He was a man already past the prime of life, and his long black hair was plentifully streaked with silver. His swarthy countenance was far from handsome, yet it was marked by great intelligence, and his features had the stamp of culture. In his deep-set eye burned the fire of genius, and his broad forehead told of the intellect within.

Mary at once saw, as he knelt before her, that this was no ordinary man, and her interest in him was instantly aroused.

Taking the instrument up lightly in his hands, he carelessly touched the strings, then burst forth into a series of soft Italian melodies, with such effect that the whole Court was hushed into silence. The Queen herself listened like one spellbound. She was no novice on the lute, having learned to play on it with skill in her happier days in France; but such music as this she had never heard before.

At last the sound seemed to fade away like a dream, and with a long breath the Court awakened as from a blissful trance.

As for the Queen, she remained in the same attitude in which she had listened for a full minute after the music had ceased, a glow of pleasure mantling her fair cheek and brow. Rousing herself at last, she looked doubtfully at the duke.

"Your grace has won," she said, detaching the pearl pendant from her necklace, "and here is the stake."

"Nay, my lady," replied the Italian, "you have won upon the viol if I have won upon the lute, so we are quits."

"Quits, call you it?" cried Mary. "For such music as that to be played to us every day we would almost sacrifice our crown. Duke, will you grant us a favour, which we hesitate to ask lest you refuse?"

"You have but to name your wish, your Majesty, and it shall be a command," answered the ambassador gallantly.

"Will you permit this David Rizzio to join our Royal Court here at Holyrood?"

A shade passed over the duke's brow, but he would not break his word.

"An the fellow choose to leave my train, your Majesty is welcome to him," he replied.

The Queen smiled joyously.

"We shall ask him at once," she said. Then, in a louder tone, she gave the command:

"David Rizzio, come hither!"

The Italian approached nearer to the throne, and Mary, assuming her resistless voice and manner, asked:

"Will you consent to leave your present master and join our Royal Court? There are few favours we shall not show you."

"Your Majesty's will is my law," answered the musician; and so his fate was sealed.

Events marched rapidly in those days. Rizzio soon became the most favoured of Court officials, and in 1564 Mary created him her Foreign Secretary. On Sunday, the 29th of July of the following year, she celebrated her unhappy marriage with her cousin, Darnley, from which date the worst of her troubles may be reckoned to have commenced. Within a month after the nuptials, Murray's rebellion broke forth, and though for a time he was subdued and exiled with the other nobles who had taken part in the affair, it was only one head of the hydra that had been crushed. Morton assumed the reins which Murray had previously held, and this unscrupulous nobleman soon began to hatch mischief. Darnley's true character came out almost immediately after

he began to share the crown-matrimonial, and Morton, for his own ends, furthered the schemes of the Royal Consort. In the way of their intrigues stood David Rizzio. Firmly attached to his mistress, and to the Romish faith, the Foreign Secretary became the confidential adviser of the Crown, and steadily blocked all attempts to get full authority and government into the hands of the dissolute Darnley.

Under these circumstances, and not without secret jealousy on the part of the cousin-husband of Mary, a conspiracy, with Ruthven at its head, and with the active co-operation of Morton, was set afoot, having for its purpose the assassination of the musician-favourite.

To conspire at that time meant to execute, and no sooner was the plot agreed upon than the method of its accomplishment was decided.

On the evening of Saturday, the 9th of March, 1566, the retainers of Morton, and the other lords, his accomplices, assembled secretly near the palace, to the number of five hundred. Ruthven, dark, bigoted, and inhuman, looking like a ghost in armour, having risen from a sick-bed where he had been confined for months by a dangerous and wasting disease, was there. Morton, crafty and cruel, was by his side, with Lord George Douglas and the others.

"Morton, you will lead us past the guard," said Ruthven in a hollow voice. "The Lord High Chancellor of Scotland cannot be denied."

"That is true," replied the earl; "and when once you have gained admission I will remain to guard the entry."

The wily villain did not wish to be recognised as taking an active part in the assassination.

Thus the matter was settled, and with stealthy footsteps the murderers set out.

Mary, all unsuspicious of the wolves so near at hand, was seated at supper in the little ante-room off her bed-chamber, an apartment only about twelve feet square, with her illegitimate sister, the Countess of Argyle, her brother, Lord Robert Stuart, and the intended victim, David Rizzio. In waiting were the Master of the Household and some inferior attendants.

The secretary had been in bad health for some time, and was looking sallow and ill. He was wearing on this fatal evening a loose robe-de-chambre of furred damask, with a satin doublet, and a hose of russet velvet, and he wore also a rich jewel about his neck, the Queen's own gift, which was never heard of after his death.

To this quiet party, about eight o'clock, entered Darnley, with a flushed face, as if he had been drinking too deeply, and sat down familiarly beside the Queen.

"You are late, husband mine," said Mary, playfully. "I fear me the viands will be cold."

"I come not hither to eat," he replied; "my business is of a graver sort."

"Indeed!" exclaimed her Majesty, somewhat piqued. "It is so seldom you honour us with your presence now that we thought to have spent a pleasant hour in your company."

ENTERED DARNLEY WITH FLUSHED FACE.

The gentle reproach seemed to cut Darnley to the quick. He glowered savagely at the beautiful woman who had honoured him by making him her husband.

"Cease your whimpering!" he growled between his teeth. "I am in no mood to harbour your reproaches!"

Mary glanced at him, and marked his lowering brow. The blood of the Stuarts was instantly afire in her veins. Drawing herself up in her chair, she cast upon him a look of withering scorn.

"If you do not remember that I am your Queen," she said, "you may at least recollect that I am a woman!"

The rebuke told home, for Darnley sat moodily silent for the next few minutes.

Presently he looked up, with an eager expression upon his face, for his ear had caught the sound for which he listened—the clank of armour ascending the trap-staircase from his own room below.

Crowding into the bed-chamber came the conspirators, and then the door of the supper-room was rudely flung open, and Ruthven, gaunt and gloomy, stalked into the apartment. Without ceremony, he threw himself into a chair, his armour rattling about his lank and exhausted frame.

"What means this insolent intrusion?" demanded Mary, starting from her seat, her eyes flashing with indignation, and her whole frame trembling with anger and excitement, "and why come you hither in the garb of one intent upon evil?"

Turning his cavernous eyes upon Rizzio, Ruthven, in a deep voice exclaimed:

"I intend no evil save to one, and that is he who now stands by your side."

The minstrel, scenting the danger, had risen and drawn his dagger with the one hand, while with the other he clutched frantically at Mary's robe.

"My Lord Darnley—husband," exclaimed the Queen, "can you allow me to be insulted thus? Hurl yonder ruffian from the room, and grant me protection from the violence which threatens!"

The only reply vouchsafed was a mocking laugh, and

"I intend no evil save to one."

Mary, seeing that no assistance was to be obtained from her cold-blooded consort, turned to the intruder.

"My Lord of Ruthven," she said, in a voice of calmness and self-possession, though her woman's heart beat wildly in her breast, "we command you, under pain of treason, to withdraw from our presence. If this gentleman, our Foreign Secretary, hath committed any crime let it be inquired into by Parliament now assembled. This proceeding is outrageous, and, again, I, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, personally command you to withdraw."

"When you give yonder lute-playing rascal into our hands," answered Ruthven, "we will go and leave your Majesty in peace; but for him, the time hath come."

At these words, the nobles from the adjoining chamber rushed in a body through the doors into the royal presence.

Mary, like a lioness at bay, stood facing them, while Rizzio shrank, terror-stricken, into the recess of the window behind her.

"Giustizia! Giustizia!" he shouted.

But there was no pretence of justice in the scowling visages and drawn daggers which he saw before him.

For some time the sacred majesty of the Crown kept back the assassins, but Lord George Douglas, more reckless than the others, advanced. There was an attempt on the part of the attendants to eject Ruthven, and the table was overturned, with the lights upon it. Even now the unhappy Italian might have escaped in the confusion and darkness, had not the Countess of Argyle caught one of the candles as it was falling.

In the sudden gloom Douglas snatched the dirk which hung by Darnley's side from its sheath, and struck at Rizzio over the Queen's shoulder, though at the moment Mary was unaware of what was taking place. Then the shrieking Secretary was dragged from his shelter behind the petticoats of his royal mistress, into the bed-chamber, where the bloody deed was completed, the conspirators wreaking their wrath upon the victim by leaving him with no fewer than fifty-six stabs in his body.

The corpse was afterwards thrown down the stairs at the head of which the murder was finished, and carried to the porter's lodge, with Darnley's dagger still buried in its side.

For the time Rizzio was obscurely buried, but afterwards his remains were exhumed, and received more honourable sepulture near the royal vault in Holyrood Chapel.

So perished one who, had he never seen the shores of Scotland, might have lived to an honoured and honourable old age; one whose inherited talent as a musician brought him into contact with courts and monarchs; one whose chief fault was his fidelity, and of him it may not be altogether wrong to say that he was lost by a lute.

This very year the lights have again been lit in Holyrood Palace, when a king and queen went in state to the Scottish capital. There, in the old hall which once echoed to the despairing death-shrieks of the Savoyard musician, the best and noblest in the land did homage to their well-beloved monarch Edward (the First of Scotland, and Seventh of England) and his gentle consort, Alexandra. We wonder whether the sovereign, when he walked in proud procession through the passages and rooms, was shown the suspicious stain at the head of the staircase, which the believing aver to be the indelible mark caused by the blood of the martyred Rizzio.

THE END.

The Murderer and the Press.

SAMUEL WILKINSON, the brutal murderer of an old woman named Kaye, in 1896, was not devoid of a certain grim humour. In the yard where the scaffold was erected—he was hanged at Nottingham—he observed four or five grave-looking gentlemen, and in an audible voice he asked the prison chaplain who they were.

"The gentlemen of the Press," replied the clergyman in a whisper. "Pray attend to what I am saying. Have done with earthly things."

"Oh!" said Wilkinson, "the newspaper men! Well, gentlemen," he continued, addressing the reporters, "I hope we shall meet again, and be sure I'll keep a warm corner for you."

He Had Thrown it Out.

LORD ELLENBOROUGH was once about to start on circuit, when Lady Ellenborough expressed a wish to accompany him. He said he had no objection, provided she did not fill up the carriage with bandboxes, which he hated most heartily. On the first day's journey Lord Ellenborough happened to stretch his legs, and struck his foot against something under the opposite seat. He dragged the offending article out, and discovered it was a bandbox. Down went the window and out flew the offending luggage. The coachman pulled up, and the footman, thinking that the bandbox had accidentally fallen out of the carriage, was hastening to pick it up, when his lordship furiously yelled out, "Drive on; never mind that thing!" and the bandbox was accordingly left by the hedge-side. Having arrived at the county town where the assizes were to be held, Lord Ellenborough proceeded to array himself in his judge's robes for his reappearance in the courthouse.

"Now," said he, "where is my wig?—where is my wig?"

"My lord," answered his valet, "it was thrown out of the carriage window!"

THE TRUE & TERRIBLE STORY of a TRAGEDY IN HIGH LIFE.

THE SEDUCTION OF A BEAUTIFUL BARONESS BY PRINCE —— AND HER SUBSEQUENT SUICIDE.

"Her fall, engendered by the artifice
Of villains, did so rankle in her mind
That, blasted by her impotence to save
That which is priceless, she in death did drown
Her long contrived dishonour."

—From "The Brothers,"
An old tragedy, ascribed to NICHOLAS ROWE.

THE room was brilliantly lighted. Rose-shaded clusters of electric lights filled the sumptuously furnished apartment with a soft, warm glow, and cast a crimson shadow on the woman's face.

The Baroness Palermo was certainly a beautiful woman, but to-night Signor di Bario thought she looked even more lovely than usual, and this was a high compliment, for the signor was undoubtedly a good judge of feminine charms.

She sat on a low chair before the fire, robed in a white evening gown, spangled with silver, a necklace of diamonds clasping her slender throat, and a jewelled star glittering from the wavy masses of her rich Titian hair.

She was bending forward, her face resting on her hands, listening to the signor playing on the violin, her lips parted, and a far-away expression in her deep violet eyes.

The signor made a strange figure. He was tall and thin, with a rather pale face, brilliant black eyes, and a high, smooth forehead, surmounted by long, dark, curling ringlets.

He drew from the violin a most exquisite harmony, he filled the room with articulate dreams, and he spoke to the baroness's heart in a language more subtly eloquent than the burning rhetoric or the honeyed sophistries of the lover's tongue.

And all the time he was thinking that the beautiful woman before him, who was wrapt in the enchantment of his music, had a very fine figure, and was a creature out of whom a great deal of animal pleasure might be extracted.

There was another person in the apartment besides Signor di Bario and the Baroness Palermo, but he was a creature of little account—he was only the baroness's husband.

He was a very fat old man, with a bald head and watery eyes, and at present he was smoking a cigar and thinking of prawns. The baron was frequently thinking of prawns, indeed, the indiscretions of his youth and those indigestible delicacies so beloved of the epicurean generally, occupied the greater part of the baron's thoughts.

The indiscretions of his youth had been many and various; indeed, he had led a wild and dissolute life, until the pains and penalties of a premature old age restricted his capacity for indulging in the pursuits of folly, when he had suddenly determined to don the sober garb of respectability, find a suitable wife, and settle down to a quiet and well-ordered existence. He had been much struck by the physical beauty of the lady who was now his baroness, and, although his years fitted him rather to be her father than her husband, he found no difficulty in convincing her parents, by a judicious display of his worldly wealth, that there could be no more fitting spouse for their daughter.

So the beautiful girl was sold to the sybarite, amidst general rejoicings; presents were made, effusive columns written in the fashionable newspapers, and the holy blessings of the Church given to this "most sacred marriage."

And yet, loaded with honours as she was, transported to an enviable social position as she was, the young baroness was unhappy. This gorgeous ceremony, these brilliant presentations, this decrepit, world-weary old husband, were far from being the realisation of her girlish dreams of love and the ideal wedding of young life with young life.

She was unhappy now, as she sat in her low chair in the sumptuously-furnished room in the Hôtel de ——, Naples, with the firelight mingling with her Titian hair, and bathing her sad, musing face and snow-white bosom in crimson shadows.

She was sad because she was in love with Signor di Bario, who was playing with her soul on the violin.

He stopped with a sudden jerk, and put the instrument down.

The baroness started, a look of pained annoyance flitting across her face; it seemed to her when the music ceased that she had been dropped from the elysium heights of paradise into the abyss of a cold, matter-of-fact, unlovely world.

She sighed and shuddered slightly, as if struck by the cold, then she sank back in the luxury of the richly-embroidered cushions and closed her eyes.

The Signor di Bario approached her, a slight smile on his lips.

"You like my music, baroness?" he asked, in a soft, low voice, somewhat reminiscent of the loud purring of a cat.

The baroness opened her eyes and smiled through the tears that hung on their long, beautiful lashes.

"Your music, signor—like it? It is divine! I am in heaven whilst you are playing!"

"You make me the happiest of men. My little unworthy——"

"Was it your own composition?"

"My own. A sort of song without words."

"A song that spoke to my soul."

"Baroness, it was for you it was composed, it was to you I played. The song expressed what my heart felt!"

He had sat down beside her and had taken her hand. She had not resisted. Now he put it to his lips and pressed upon the slight, pale fingers a burning kiss.

The baroness drew away her hand; she trembled violently, and there was a strange light in her eyes.

The signor pressed his face close to hers, and she did not move, but sat, still and rigid, gazing on the musician with the rapt, half-frightened, fatally fascinated look of the dove that powerlessly waits the poisoned fangs of the serpent.

"Love!" whispered the signor, in a voice that shook with passion, and he pressed his lips to hers.

"Ah, God!" she exclaimed, and sank weeping on his shoulder.

He covered her with kisses, mad, fervent kisses that almost scorched her white, fair flesh, and she—she returned them with all the passion of self-renunciation and long-stifled love. His lips drew forth her soul. She felt as she never before felt in her life, at once exalted to a queen and demeaned to a slave—a queen of beauty and a slave of her lover's will.

She half thought that she would like to die, die on her lover's breast, fade out of existence with her lips pressed to his, with their hearts beating in unison, and so be kissed to sleep. Suddenly she was recalled from dreams to actuality by a significant look on the part of her lover.

Her husband! Oh, she remembered now she had a husband, an old man to whom she had been sold by her mother. Oh, how she detested him!

Mechanically she unloosened her arms, mechanically she drew back from the signor's embraces, mechanically she arose and looked at her husband.

He was fast asleep in a corner, snoring audibly and dreaming about prawns. A look of intolerable disgust swept over the beautiful girl's face.

Her husband had never seemed so horrible to her as he did at that moment.

"I will be going, beloved," whispered Di Bario.

"Yes, yes, go; leave me awhile to think."

"One kiss, beloved."

"Oh, my love."

Again, for a brief minute, she abandoned herself to the transports of a wild first love; revelled in the impassioned ecstasies that were doubly sweet to a heart long denied love, its lawful heritage.

At last she tore herself from the signor's embrace.

With a gesture she told him to go; he bowed, and left the room.

She sank down on her knees before the fire, buried her face in the cushions of the chair, and abandoned herself to a fit of uncontrollable weeping.

When the baron woke up, he found her reclining on the couch.

"Where's the signor?" said he, rubbing his eyes. "Gone! eh?"

He yawned, stretched himself, and lit a cigar. He noticed that his wife's eyes were red, and their lashes still wet.

"Been crying, eh? The signor's beastly music, I sup-

pose? I must tell him to play something cheerful. It's sickening. He's always giving you the dumps."

The baroness did not reply, and the baron put down his cigar and fell asleep again.

A strange couple truly, a strange, ill-assorted, unhappy couple; Mammon was theirs to command, and bought pleasures to be had for the asking; and yet love, that wayward, arbitrary god would not be seduced by the gleam of shekels, and when he came into the household of the Baron and Baroness Palermo, it was as an intruder and a disturber.

Let us return to Signor di Bario, a clever musician with a genius for adventure.

The signor was a man who moved in exalted circles of society, but he was not ashamed at times to descend to the level of the card-cheat, the swindler, and the blackmailer. He was an unprincipled scoundrel, whose adroitness in the management of discreditable episodes made him a very useful tool in the hands of individuals whose high estate and notoriety necessitated their exclusion from open participation in various intrigues, in which they actually owned the most important interests. The Signor di Bario had on several occasions stood between "the fierce light that beats upon a throne," and royal intriguers, and had thus gained the patronage, to say nothing of the contempt, of certainly two crowned heads, which fact ensured his admission into the best—or, perhaps, it would be more accurate to say the wealthiest—society in Europe. He was at present congratulating himself upon his latest conquest, and speculating as to the best possible means for turning the adventure to his personal profit. The signor had no soul for a common "affair of love."

He reflected that it would not pay him to run away with the baroness—that would only mean social extinction and ruin. How was he then to make the affair profitable? The baroness was hopelessly in love with him, and would go to any lengths; of that he felt sure. Should he decoy her to a house of ill-fame, then inform her husband and demand a large sum of money as the price of his silence?

This seemed the best possible plan his mind had engendered at present; but it was undeniably attended with great risks.

The signor had reached his rooms by the time this scheme had crystallised in his brain; he determined to go to bed, and to give the matter his earnest attention in the morning.

He had called for his servant, and was preparing to seek what he considered was a well-earned repose, when he was told that a gentleman waited without on urgent business. The signor glanced at the card and raised his eyebrows.

"Show him in at once," said he to the servant.

"Count Wirbur," announced the man, and ushered into the room a tall, thin man, heavily cloaked and bearded.

"My dear count, this is indeed a pleasure."

"Signor, the pleasure is mine."

"Leave us," said Di Bario to his servant.

The personage who had been announced as Count Wirbur was, as we have said, tall and slight, his shoulders were bent and drooping, his face was the colour of old parchment, and was marked with innumerable wrinkles; his hair, which was somewhat sparse, was of a sandy hue, interspersed with grey, and contrasted with his heavy full-length beard.

His eyes burnt with remarkable brightness; they seemed to have a reddish tinge, glowed fiercely in their sunken sockets, and lent an added unpleasantness to an already repulsive figure.

"Your highness," began the signor.

"Count, please, count," said the other peremptorily.

"Incognito?"

"Yes. I have worn this beard three days. It is extremely uncomfortable. Are we likely to be disturbed?"

"Impossible."

The so-called count gave his beard a twist and threw it on to the table. He was now clean-shaven but for a ragged moustache, and looked more repulsive than ever.

"What is your highness's pleasure?" inquired Di Bario.

"Call me count."

"Pardon, I forgot."

"Well, well, it doesn't much matter if we are alone. I'll come to business."

"Delighted, I'm sure."

"Of course you're delighted. I hear you are very friendly with the Baron and Baroness Palermo."

"I have that honour."

The signor was a little mystified, and accordingly cautious.

"She is a beautiful woman, the baroness. I saw her today."

The signor's heart gave a jump. He began to see the drift of the interview, the like of which he had experienced on many occasions, and he saw prospective riches accruing to him out of the transaction.

"Yes, she is certainly beautiful, your highness," he said slowly.

"The finest I've seen for many a long day."

"Your highness is undeniably a good judge."

"Ah, yes, I suppose I am. Well, look here, signor, you must bring this woman to me to-morrow night."

The signor sprang out of his chair in affected astonishment.

"Is your highness mad? It is impossible."

"Nothing is impossible to you when you are well paid."

"But this is so extraordinary——"

"Most ordinary to a man of your experience."

"But she is not a common woman."

"I am aware of that fact."

"Consider her condition."

"I have done."

"There will be a most fearful scandal."

"She must never know me."

"Of course not, but me!"

"Oh, you! You will be well paid; you must take care of yourself. They will keep silence for their honour's sake."

"The baron may shoot me!"

"Pah! Do not ape the child! We are too old acquaintances for that, signor. You are making difficulties so as to increase your price."

"Oh, no, your highness."

"I know you, my friend," said the mysterious count, with an ugly grin. He named a sum of money to be paid over to the signor for his part in the transaction—a sum far exceeding Di Bario's most sanguine expectations.

"Do you agree now?" said the visitor.

"It shall be done. The risk is stupendous, but somehow or other it shall be done—on the terms mentioned."

"Good, very good! At the old house, then, at the old time, I shall expect you."

"Yes, I shall be there, but, remember, it is no convent girl this time."

The royal visitor—for such in fact he was—did not reply. He readjusted his beard before the mirror, nodded curtly to Di Bario, and left the apartment.

The signor flung his arms up above his head and burst into a fit of laughter. He could almost have danced with merriment. Such a stroke of fortune did not fall upon him every day.

"The gods are bountiful to me," said he; "what luck that I should have declared myself to the baroness to-night! Clearly, I must be the special care of the devil; he conspires for my good fortune."

He sat down and wrote the baroness a long letter, a letter full of endearments and protestations of eternal fidelity.

The conclusion ran as follows:

"And now, my own love, I can wait no longer. I have thought of you unceasingly night and day for weeks and months, dreamt of you, longed for you, and I can no longer be denied. To-morrow evening is the evening of the ball. I am deputed to escort you there. Love, before we go to the ball you must come here. I cannot talk freely to you anywhere else. We must be alone with our love and our own sacred thoughts. My heart tells me how much you love me—almost as much as I love you. My heart, my glad, all-expecting heart, tells me that my darling will come to me to-morrow!"

Having despatched this precious epistle, the Signor di Bario at last sought the deferred repose of sleep.

Unlike the signor, the Baroness Palermo did not sleep that night. She lay awake through the long, slow, gliding hours, her bosom traversed by a thousand tumultuous emotions. She was happy, radiantly happy, and yet she was miserable, unutterably miserable—but love is nothing if not an emotional paradox.

She lay in her silk night-gown, snug in the luxury of her downy bed, her glorious, Titian hair streaming over the damask-white pillows.

Presently the crimson splendour of a Neapolitan sun arose in the heavens, streamed through the curtained windows, made strange patterns on the bed coverlet, and glided with amorous touch to the soft, pale foot and ivory-white ankle that protruded from beneath the ruffled sheets. A wish that her lover could see her now stole into the beautiful girl's mind. What would he do? Clasp her in his arms and drown discretion in kisses?

A maid came in, silent and quick-footed, pulled up the

blinds, brought the baroness her morning chocolate, together with Di Bario's letter, and prepared at the side of the bed a warm, scented bath.

"Leave me, Annette," said the baroness, as she opened the note with trembling hands and read it with tear-dimmed eyes.

The passion-breathing words of the letter pierced to her very heart. She read it again and again, finally slipping it through the bosom of her night-gown, where it lay pressed against her palpitating breast, while she lay back and thought, and thought, and thought.

Yes, she would go to Di Bario's rooms that night! One hour of her life should be devoted to love, and love alone! She would revel for one brief evening in all the unrestrained ecstasies for which her heart craved so persistently.

She sprang out of bed without summoning the maid, secreted her letter, and slipped from the clinging folds of her loose robe. She plunged into the water of the bath, grown cold from waiting, but felt no chill; her blood was on fire to-day.

The maid came in and uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

"My lady has been in the bath without my help!"

"Yes, Annette!" cried the baroness, as she sprang dripping from the water. "I feel strong to-day—strong and young and glad!"

"God be praised that my lady is so well!" said Annette piously, as she dried her mistress's warm, glowing limbs with soft damask towels.

The time dragged itself monotonously out. Late in the afternoon the baron and baroness met Signor di Bario in the street as they were stepping from their carriage into one of the principal shops.

"Ah! signor, you take my wife to the ball to-night, don't forget," said the baron.

"I shall not forget. How could I!" replied Di Bario, with a bow.

As the baroness passed him he pressed her hand.

"To-night!" he said.

The baroness was early in her ball-dress, a wonderful robe, composed of the richest texture, the front of which interspaced with a silvered gauze, through which the pristine purity of her white under-gown showed brilliantly.

She did not have to wait long for the signor. He arrived in good time, faultlessly attired, and smiling as amiably as ever.

"What a glorious woman she is!" he reflected. "It is a pity his highness is so pressing."

He threw over her gleaming shoulders a long cloak, took her arm, bade the baron adieu and wished him a comfortable sleep.

He handed her into the carriage, whispered a word to the driver, then got in himself.

THE END.

She lay in his arms during the whole of the journey, and did not notice that they had been driving for nearly an hour.

"You cannot doubt my love," said she; "see what I risk for you!"

"I do not doubt it, beloved!" said the signor.

The carriage had abruptly stopped. The signor alighted and helped the baroness out. She looked around, and did not recognise the street.

"Your rooms?" she asked.

"My house I have taken for the occasion."

A small door, that seemed to be a slit in a blank wall, was thrown open, and the baroness, without a word or a misgiving, preceded Di Bario inside.

He followed, and the door was closed.

She found herself in a dimly-lit but apparently richly-furnished corridor, ascended a flight of stairs into a beautifully-decorated apartment, where supper had been prepared for two.

"Shall we sup?" said Di Bario.

"No, my love. I could touch nothing."

"You feel tired?" he suggested with an ardent glance.

"Yes, I am tired of everything in the world but you."

The signor opened an inner door which led out of the supper-room into a bedroom.

"I will follow you," he whispered.

Without a word the baroness glided in, and the signor closed the door.

After a lapse of a few minutes he coughed twice; the outer door was softly opened, and the personage whom we have introduced to our readers as Count Wirbur, but who was addressed by Di Bario as "Your Highness," stole in on tiptoe.

His red eyes had a wolfish glare, and his lantern jaws were distended in a loathsome grin of expectation.

The signor nodded towards the bedroom. The mysterious stranger opened the door and slipped in, and Di Bario turned the key in the lock.

For a moment there was silence, and then a fearful, an agonised, a terrified scream in a woman's voice rang out from the locked room.

Piercing shrieks, cries, sobs, and supplications followed, mingled with the strident laughter of the man or devil—we scarce know which to call him—who was enjoying to the utmost the terror and horror he inspired in the miserable girl.

The signor went to the supper-table, drank off a glass of wine, counted the bank-notes which the prince had thrown him as he crossed the room, and almost immediately left the house.

The next morning he was far from Naples.

Two hours after the events we have described, two women huddled the baroness into her clothes, and hurried her out of the brothel, half-dazed and fainting, into the street.

A carriage was waiting for her; she was helped in and driven swiftly away. The carriage pulled up at her hotel

The baroness alighted with a firm step. To her astonishment she found she had been driving in her own carriage.

"Who sent you for me?" said she to the coachman in a calm, clear voice.

"The Signor di Bario, my lady."

She walked quietly up the stairs of the hotel to her own apartments, which were on the first floor.

The baron was long ago asleep in his bed.

She dismissed Annette, and locked herself in her own bedroom.

She switched on the electric light and looked at herself in the long mirror.

Her face was white to deathliness, her eyes were swollen and bloodshot, and there was a tiny scratch on her neck.

She looked very old, too old to have any emotions, to experience any sorrows or to feel any joys. She seemed a woman who was moving in death, a strange, unnatural being who was dead, and yet not dead.

She began to giggle, a little hysterical girlish giggle, and the effect was terrible; it was as if a corpse had risen from the tomb and was playing the coquette.

She left the mirror, went to the chest of drawers and took a silver-plated pistol. Then she went over to the bed, and, resting one hand on the pillows, raised the other, in which was the revolver, to her beautiful forehead, and stared at herself once again in the mirror.

She took a long look at her last pose in life, and then pulled the trigger. A shot rang out, and the lifeless body of the baroness sank on to the bed. Her brains were bespattered all over the dainty coverlet, on which the sunbeams had made such queer patterns on that very morning.

The baron was the only person who heard the shot, but he thought he had had nightmare, and fell asleep again to dream of prawns.

In the morning the glorious crimson of the Neapolitan dawn arose in the heavens, streamed through the window-curtains on to a scene—a scene we will not depict!

Annette was ready with the chocolate and the scented bath, but the baroness required neither.

They buried her very quietly, and, as is usual in such cases, the affair was hushed up.

We will now make a confession.

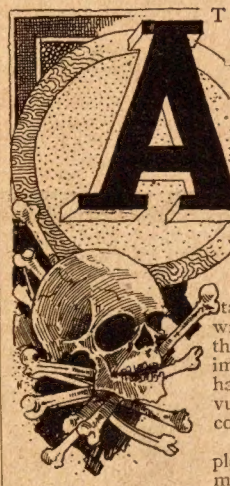
The tragedy we have related took place nearly four years ago. Most of the principal characters are still alive. It did not take place in Naples, neither was the name of the baron and baroness that of Palermo, nor the signor's Di Bario; but these personages move in such exalted circles that a change of nomenclature, as well as that of the town in which the fearful tragedy took place, was deemed necessary.

It is not permissible to relate a crime committed by a foreign royalty, at least, when the royalty in question is still alive.

Husband Fights Wife.

ONE of the most extraordinary results of a legal argument took place in the early part of the seventeenth century. Charles Coypeau, father of the French poet and musician, was an advocate by profession and member of one of the French parlements, and, like "Father William," of "Alice in Wonderland" fame, he "argued each case with his wife." Thereby she acquired no mean knowledge of law, and eventually was quite his equal in drawing up a line of defence or a plan for the prosecution of some rascal. One day the worthy pair were engaged on a case involving the rights of two brothers, and Coypeau quoted a passage in Justinian's Institutes, to which his better half took exception, declaring that the great law-giver was averse to the interpretation which her husband was putting on his words. From a friendly discussion the couple got heated, each maintaining that their view was the one which Justinian took, until at last, losing all self-control, Madame challenged Monsieur Coypeau to a duel with swords to settle the matter once and for all, for she declared that one of them must die inasmuch as they could never live together after their legal difference. Coypeau agreed, the swords were fetched, and witnesses summoned, when it was found that madame was so short that her husband had an unfair advantage. To equalise this she was provided with a pair of very high pattens in which she commenced to do battle. Coypeau at first contented himself with warding off her thrusts, but as the little woman did not cool down but waxed more furious every moment, he allowed her to touch him lightly with the point of her sword at the same moment as he managed to prick her. Honour being thus satisfied, and the contest being decided as a drawn battle, the pair cooled down and left the debatable passage in Justinian to others to solve.

LAST WORDS ON THE SCAFFOLD



AT the period when executions were public events, to be witnessed by anyone who chose to pay for a suitable spot or to risk hustling in a more or less ruffianly crowd, much importance was attached to and interest evinced in the last words of the unhappy wretch on the scaffold. As a general rule, the culprit availed himself of the opportunity to address the multitude, and was allowed a good deal of latitude by the authorities. Sometimes he was, like the moody Dane, an unconscionable time a-dying! The temptation to prolong his life even by a few wretched moments was irresistible, with the result that the onlookers often got impatient at the length of the criminal's harangue, and begged the hangman, in vulgar parlance, to "cut the cackle and come to the 'osses!"

Nowadays, when executions take place in private, and the Press learns no more of them than the authorities choose to go forth to the world, less importance attaches to the dying words of the malefactor. But even now it sometimes leaks out that the criminal has at the last moment made some statement regarding his crime. The great majority of murderers will not confess until they are almost face to face with their Maker, and a very great number have gone out into the darkness without having made any confession at all. An obstinate denial of their guilt has characterised the most brutal criminals since the beginning of time. It is the more sensitive, emotional murderer who, as a rule, finds himself unable to undertake his last dread journey without the relief which comes from the unburthening of the conscience. The callous murderer, instigated only by a morbid lust for blood, has no spiritual hopes and no spiritual fears. If he has a soul at all, it is dead within him, and he faces death, not with the courage of repentance and resignation, but with the callous indifference of the mindless man. He believes that death means annihilation, and the future has no fears for him. He is of the earth, earthy.

To the student of crime and criminals, the last words of these depraved men cannot fail to be of fascinating interest.

It was Fauntleroy, the great banker, who was hanged in 1824, who ejaculated, "Now for the Great Secret," a moment before he was launched into eternity. He was an educated gentleman, whose temperament prevented him from regarding his fate with the callous indifference which distinguishes the brutal murderer. How different the circumstances of his departure from life to those of the man John Jones, alias Owen, who was hanged at Aylesbury in 1870. This monster—whose dread deeds were described in No. 34 of FAMOUS CRIMES—was disturbed while in the act of robbing the tool-shed of a lonely house at the village of Denham, near Uxbridge. Annoyed at the interruption, he first murdered the master of the house, a man named Marshall, and then, his appetite whetted for blood, he brutally despatched the remainder of the family, including the aged grandmother and a young child, seven persons in all, with a heavy smith's hammer. He was tried and convicted, and on the scaffold his last words were, "My friends, I am condemned to die for the murder of Mr. What's-his-name"—here he forgot the name of his victims, and turned for information to one of the officials—"oh, yes! for the murder of Mr. Marshall; but, my friends, I am innocent!" That the miscreant should have forgotten the very name of the family he had ruthlessly slaughtered, and for whose murder he had been tried, seems incredible, but is none the less actually true.

The German, Franz Muller, who murdered Mr. Briggs in a railway carriage in 1864, persistently denied his guilt in the face of the clearest evidence, and it was not until the last possible moment that he was induced to acknowledge the justice of the sentence.

"Have you done it?" he was asked by the clergyman who attended his last moments, and, "Yes, I have done it," he replied in German half-a-minute before the drop fell. That Muller ever confessed at all has been denied in some quarters; but the clergyman in question has vouched for the absolute truth of his statement.

John Gleeson Wilson—the wholesale gentleman who exterminated the Henrickson family in 1849—ran up the stairs of the scaffold three steps at a time, and being received with shouts of execration by the crowds, shook his fist in their direction and d——d them most heartily until the bolt was drawn.

Holloway and Haggerty were hanged in 1807 for the murder of Mr. Steele on Hounslow Heath in 1802, and some doubt as to their actual guilt is even now entertained by those who have carefully studied the case of this mysterious crime. They were convicted on the doubtful evidence of an accomplice, and Holloway made a great impression on the spectators when he appeared on the scaffold by perpetually bowing and saying, "I am innocent—innocent. Gentlemen, no verdict—no verdict! Gentlemen, innocent. Innocent! Innocent!"

John Thurtell was hanged in 1824. He was a man of fine appearance and good address; but his murder of Mr. Weare was committed with great atrocity, and he thoroughly deserved his fate. At the last, he was greatly concerned as to whether the drop would be sufficiently long, and his last words, as the hangman was attaching the end of the rope to the beam above, were, "For the love of God, give me fall enough."

Charles Peace, the notorious burglar-assassin, expressed similar fears that the gallows might not work properly, and his last recorded words were a whining request for a glass of water at a time when his being thirsty could have been of little consequence, seeing that five seconds afterwards he was a dead man.

Greenacre—who, having murdered Mrs. Brown, distributed her mutilated remains about the metropolis in 1837—expressed a great apprehension of the vast crowd assembled to witness his execution, and his last words were to request as a favour that he might not be long exposed to the gaze of the multitude without, and that his spectacles might be given to Sarah Gale, the partner of his guilt.

Lefroy—a disciple of the aforementioned Franz Muller—was hanged in 1881 for the murder of Mr. Gould on the Brighton Railway. This young man—a weak, vain, irresponsible person, who did not, I think, actually contemplate murder—was reduced by overpowering terror to a state almost of insensibility when carried to the scaffold, and he was quite unable to speak; but amongst his last words was a request for a daily newspaper in which he read a favourable criticism of a play of his produced at a London theatre only the night previously

George Manley, who was hanged for murder in 1738, addressed the crowd at great length, and with some ingenuity argued that his crime was no worse than those of "Marlborough, who killed his thousands, and Alexander his millions." His last words were, "I'm a little murderer, and must be hanged; Marlborough and Alexander plundered countries; they are great men!"

In 1803 two men, named John Terry and Joseph Heald, were executed for the brutal murder of an old woman named Smith in order to obtain from her a small sum of money that had been sent to her by her son from Leeds. Terry conducted himself in an amazing way on the scaffold, shouting and bawling to the onlookers, and even making a very determined effort to escape by jumping from the ladder placed against the gallows. His companion in guilt besought him to allow him the benefit of the prayers, but the other continued to shout and to make the most clamorous resistance to the execution of the sentence. It took five men to drag him to the drop, and to place the rope over his head, and even then he displayed extraordinary violence, his last recorded words being, "I won't hang! I won't hang!"

Richard Patch was hanged in 1806 for the murder of his employer, Mr. Blight, by shooting him, near Exeter. For a long time he refused all religious consolation, and declined to make any statement; but at the very last, in response to the exhortations of the chaplain, he was prevailed upon to say, "I have confessed my sins to God; man can give me no relief," and he did not speak again.

Thomas Simmons, called at the time "The Man of Blood," murdered a Mrs. Warner and a Mrs. Hammerstone in 1808, at the same time that he committed diabolical assaults on the persons of Mr. and Mrs. Boreham, of Hoddesden, and their servant, all of whom nearly fell victims to this monster. He expressed regret that he had not killed them all, and exhibited throughout his trial the utmost coolness and indifference. A clergyman endeavoured vainly to bring him to a sense of his position, even while standing beneath the fatal beam; but he refused to attend to the prayers, and roughly requested the reverend gentleman to "shut up all that rot and let him die in peace." With this hopeful sentiment on his lips, this blood-stained brute went calmly and coolly before the Great Judge.

Philip Nicholson was hanged at Pennenden Heath, near Maidstone, in 1813, for the murder of Mr. and Mrs. Bonar, at Chislehurst. Their son sat in a carriage at the foot of the gallows as near as possible to the condemned man, and so anxious was this gentleman to ascertain from the murderer whether he had motive or accomplice, that he despatched a person to ascend the platform after the cord was round the prisoner's neck, and to ask him questions upon the subject of the crime. The wretched being repeatedly stated that he had had no assistance in the perpetration of the dreadful deeds, and in answer to the last question put to him, "Had you any antipathy to either your master or mistress before you committed the horrid murder," he answered, "As God is in heaven, it was a momentary thought, as I have repeatedly declared before," these being his actual last words.

Eliza Fenning, whose case attracted so much attention in 1815, and whose guilt is still questioned by many, showed astonishing fortitude on the scaffold. She was asked by a gentleman who had greatly interested himself in her behalf if, in the name of God, in whose presence she stood, she knew anything of the crime with which she was charged, to make it known; and her last words, uttered distinctly and clearly, were, "Before God, then, I die innocent!"

William Corder, the young Polested farmer who murdered and buried Maria Martin in a barn in 1828, said in a very feeble voice just before he was turned off, "I am justly sentenced, and may God forgive me"; but John Stacey, who in 1829 Killed Mr. Langtrey and his housekeeper at Portsmouth, uttered a lie with his last dying breath, stating that he had been assisted in the crimes by an accomplice, whose name he mentioned. This man was arrested, but was able to prove a complete alibi. It may be mentioned here that the murderer's father stood calmly smoking his pipe in front of the gallows what time young Stacey was undergoing the last penalty of the law.

Amongst the last words of great criminals, Palmer's "The sentence is just, though the evidence is false"; Rush's "Don't hurry—take time, take time," to the hangman; Courvoisier's fervent "A toi, mon Dieu," and Mrs. Pearcey's "Rightly convicted, but on unjust evidence"—a speech very similar to that of the prince of poisoners—have all become historical.

The next instance we need mention was the most dramatic of all. Neil Cream, the American doctor who poisoned unfortunates whom he encountered in the streets, suffered the last great penalty in 1892. At the moment that the executioner was about to pull the lever which released the bolts, this man ejaculated hurriedly, "Stop a minute—I am Jack the——" He got no further. The drop fell, and he was launched into eternity. But many of the authorities who came into contact with Neil Cream believe to this hour that he was, as he intended to announce himself, the mysterious monster who created his own reign of terror in East End London in 1888.

With the recent execution of that astonishing criminal Dougal, a new terror has been added to capital punishment. It has always been understood that when the condemned man is once handed over to the hangman, his interest in this world and its affairs has ceased, and he is not asked to say another word.

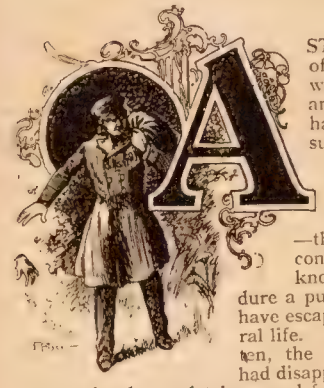
But this unwritten law has been sadly wiped aside by the remarkable action of the Rev. John Watson Blackmore, the chaplain of Chelmsford Prison since last year. This gentleman, when Dougal actually had the rope round his neck and the cap over his face, stepped forward and in a shrill, nervous voice, and with dramatic gestures, assailed the unfortunate man with importunate questions. "Dougal," he said, with hand outstretched towards the still figure of the murderer, "are you guilty or not guilty?" The man remained silent, while trepidation was written on the countenances of those looking on, and a tremor ran through even the fixed figures of the warders. Again the clergyman asked, "Guilty or not guilty?" and this time the dying man replied. Turning his head in the direction of the voice he said, in a clear and firm tone, "Guilty," and at that moment the lever was moved and he disappeared below.

It is to be hoped that the course which seemed good to the Rev. Mr. Blackmore will not be generally followed. What fearful doubts might assail us now had Dougal replied "Not guilty" with his last dying breath?

Sheward, the Wife Slayer!

Being an account of how a murder was discovered and avenged no less than eighteen years after the event, and showing that conscience doth indeed make cowards of us all.

"Thou guilty man, take up thy dead and hide it from my sight."
—HOOD, "*Eugene Aram.*"



A STRANGER case than that of William Sheward it would be hard to find in the annals of crime. Here we have a tale of a murderer suffering such mental pangs from an accusing conscience—pangs that grew more painful and acute with each succeeding year—that he was at last driven to confession and forced by the knowledge of his guilt to endure a punishment which he might have escaped for the term of his natural life. The crime had been forgotten, the facts obscured, the victim had disappeared, and the fact that she ever existed completely passed from memory of mankind in general. But one man—her murderer—could not forget. Conscience made his life one of perpetual torment; remorse preyed upon his very soul. At last, in desperation, he confessed, and a crime, committed under circumstances of great brutality eighteen years before, was at last avenged.

The old proverb says, "Murder will out." Unhappily, we know that this is not so. The romance of crime shows many cases of murder the facts concerning which have never been brought to light. But in this instance the murderer at last stood self-revealed, and paid with his life for the deed committed in the distant past.

William Sheward was, apparently, a quiet, respectable, inoffensive man, who, up till the spring of the year 1838, had resided in London. In that great city he met the woman whom he made his wife. She was a Miss Martha Francis, was a native of Wymondham, in Norfolk, and was some twelve or fifteen years his senior. In the year after the accession of the late Queen, Sheward and his wife moved to the town of Norwich, and they resided for a while in Bar Street, where the husband worked as a tailor. He next removed to White Lion Street, going into business then on his own account, but it seems that he failed not long afterwards for a considerable sum, after which he removed to Upper St. Giles Street, Norwich, and then to St. Martin's-at-Plow, where he was living in the year 1851.

In the summer of that year there was much excitement in Norwich and the neighbourhood in consequence of a mysterious crime which had been perpetrated in its midst. The remains of a woman were found in various parts of the town. The strange affair excited great attention at the time, and every exertion was made to find a solution to the mystery, to identify the victim and to discover the murderer, but all without result.

The first discovery, it appears, was made on June 21, 1851, when a young man found a human hand in a road leading to Lakenham, a suburb of Norwich. About 200 or 300 yards from the spot where the hand was discovered a foot was picked up, and these gruesome finds provoked so much excitement and horror—the Greenacre case was not yet forgotten—that diligent searches were made in the vicinity of Norwich, and pieces of flesh, bone, etc., were revealed at Hellesdon—another suburb—on June 22, Monday, the 23rd, and on the four ensuing days.

The hand first found was clenched and much discoloured, and on the remains being collected the medical men consulted expressed the opinion that they were those of a young adult female. The portions of the body were placed in spirits of wine and were kept for some time at the Guildhall at Norwich. The search for further fragments was continued, and a piece of skin and muscle was discovered on Saturday, June 28, some intestines the next day, and a hard substance, supposed to be a thigh bone, and part of a female breast on Monday, June 30.

The very last discovery was made on July 2, 1851, when some bones were found, but a day or two later, a shirt smeared with blood—which may or may not have had some connection with the deed—was picked up on Monoehold Heath, near Norwich.

After the first week in July, '51, the interest felt in the matter gradually subsided, and the occurrence of another murder at Holkham, Norfolk, about the middle of that month, also served to distract the attention of the local public from the awful revelations of the preceding weeks. A great many theories were ventilated in attempted explanation of the matter, and much needless confusion was created by sensational misstatements in the local newspapers.

At this point it must be explained that about this date Mrs. Sheward was missing, and a few of the neighbours remarked at the time that she seemed to have completely vanished, but her husband explained the disappearance of his wife by saying that she had left home on a long journey, and little or no suspicion seems to have been aroused. The man made no attempt to leave the neighbourhood; indeed, he removed to King Street, near St. Peter-per-Mounter gate Church, and then started in business as a pawnbroker, lending money on goods and plate.

While residing in this neighbourhood it was remarked that Sheward commenced to give way to drink, and he installed a woman in the place of his still absent wife, by whom during the next ten or eleven years he had two or three children. On February 13, 1862, he married this woman at the registrar's office, in King Street, Norwich. In August, 1868, Sheward, who does not appear to have been very prosperous in his pawnbroking business, disposed of his stock, principally to Mr. Boston, another pawnbroker, and then he himself took the Key and Castle Tavern, at St. Martin's-at-Oak. He left home at the end of December, 1868, and it was remarked before he left that his spirits seemed very depressed. He had stated his intention to go to London to see his sister, and had arranged to start on the Monday after Christmas, but he expressed himself as feeling ill on that day, and he did not actually start for town till Tuesday, December 28.

What he did in London until the first day of the new year, 1869, or where he stayed, is not known, but on January 1 William Sheward walked into Walworth Police Station and saw there Mr. Davis, inspector of police of one of the metropolitan divisions. To the latter Sheward, who appeared excited and anxious, said, "I want to speak to you. I have a charge to make against myself."

Davis said, "What is it? Explain yourself."

He hesitated, and then said, "For the wilful murder of my first wife at Norwich."

Davis replied, "Have you given due consideration to the very serious nature of the charge?"

He said, "I have. I have kept it for years, but I can keep it no longer. I left home on December 29, intending to destroy myself with the razor I have in my pocket." The inspector demanded the razor, and the man gave it up to him. Sheward then added, "I have been to Chelsea by the steamboat, intending to take my life, but the Almighty would not let me do it." He began to sob, and spoke in broken sentences and at intervals. The inspector remarked, "Let us all hope it will turn out a delusion," for he thought that Sheward had been drinking, but the latter seemed serious enough, and asked that the charge be taken down in writing. Davis wrote from his dictation:

"I, William Sheward, of Norwich, charge myself with the wilful murder of my first wife.—(Signed) W. S."

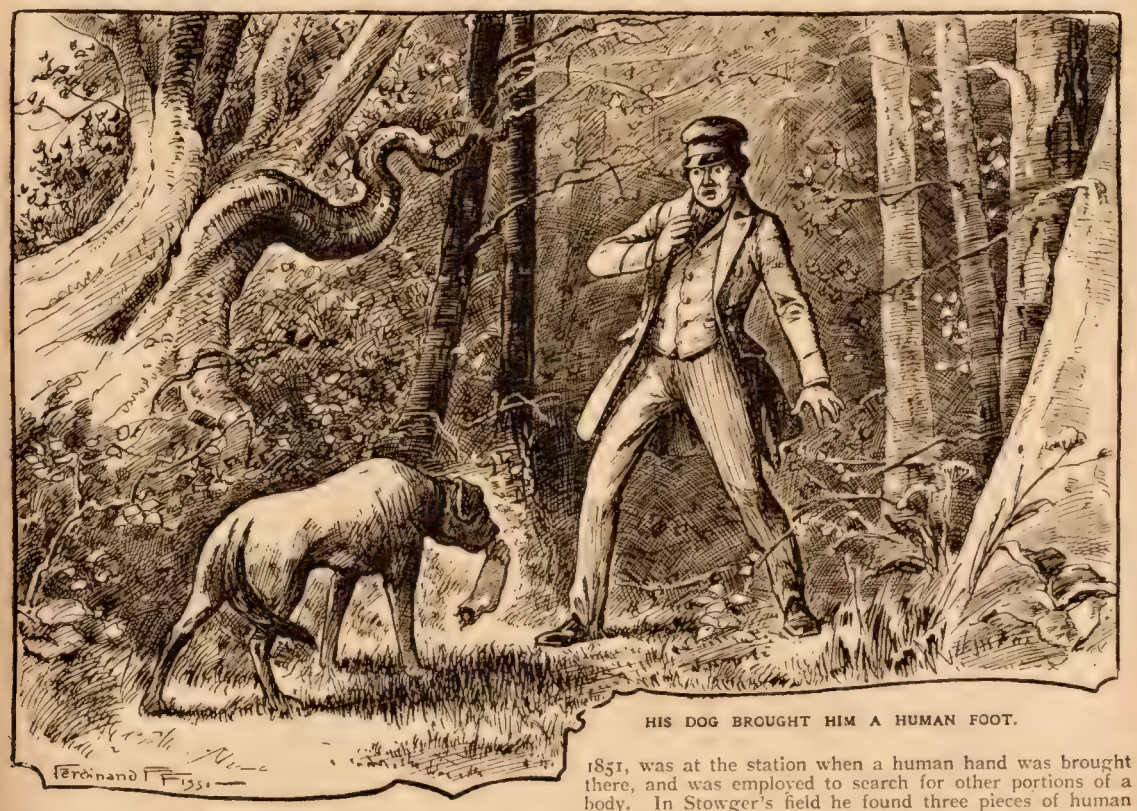
He was then placed in one of the cells at the station, being in a very distressed state of mind, but fairly sober and quite aware of what he was saying. The next morning Davis went to his cell and inquired, "Do you recollect what you said last night?" He replied, "Yes, perfectly well." Davis then asked for some particulars of the deed and the date, and Sheward said, "It was on the 15th of June, 1851." The inspector inquired how it was that the body was not discovered, and Sheward responded, "The body was cut up, and I believe a portion of it is still preserved in spirits of wine at the Guildhall, Norwich. You will find it is quite true. They know all about it at Norwich."

Davis again asked how or where the remains were found, but the prisoner—for such he was now—sighed deeply and

replied, "Oh! don't say any more! It is too horrible to talk about!" Later he added, "I went to a house in Richmond Street, Walworth, last night. That's where I first saw my first wife. That brought it all so forcibly to my mind that I was obliged to come to you and give myself up." He gave his name and address, and Davis placed himself in communication with the Norwich police, who promptly confirmed the statement that remains of a woman had been found at Norwich in 1851, and the affair began to assume a serious aspect.

Meanwhile, the prisoner appeared terribly cast down in spirits. He moaned and sobbed in his cell, and, though he had had no food for two days, he seemed quite unable to eat.

At the early examination of the prisoner sufficient evidence was brought forward to render it extremely likely that his confession was founded upon actual facts, and at length he was fully committed to take his trial for the murder of his wife at the Norfolk Assizes, in the spring of 1869, before Mr. Baron Piggott. The case excited much interest, and Norwich, which has seen so many dramatic trials for murder,



HIS DOG BROUGHT HIM A HUMAN FOOT.

was in a state of great excitement, while people came from all parts to attend what could not fail to be a deeply interesting trial.

The prisoner was a by no means ill-favoured man of fifty-two or fifty-three years. He had a heavy, rather morose expression, but there was nothing in his appearance to excite horror or repulsion, and he maintained a quiet and respectful demeanour throughout the trial.

Mr. O'Malley, Q.C., appeared for the Crown, and the prisoner—who had by now withdrawn his plea of guilty, and insisted that his confession had been made while suffering from the effects of drink—was defended by Mr. Metcalfe.

Davis, the police-inspector at Walworth, was the first witness called after Mr. O'Malley's opening address, and he described how the prisoner had come to him and confessed the crime. In cross-examination he admitted that he knew it was a very common thing for men to confess to crimes which they had never committed, but he had had no personal experience of such men. Charles Johnson, a wood dealer, 34 years of age, was the next witness, and he said that in the summer of 1851 his dog found a human hand in Lakenham Lane, about a mile and a-half from the street where the prisoner lived at that time. The hand had finger nails upon it. The witness's dog found two other pieces of flesh in the Hellesdon Road, which were taken possession of by the police.

Richard Fryer, stationmaster at Sevenoaks, in Kent, deposed that he was living at Norwich, in 1851, and that one Sunday afternoon in July of that year he went to the garden of a Mr. Merry, and there found, lying in some long grass amongst some trees, a human hand in a very advanced state of decomposition. It was a left hand, and the ring finger was missing at the second joint. The witness carried it to the Guildhall and left it there.

Thomas Dent, living at Tronse, a woolstapler, said that his dog brought him a human foot on a Sunday in June, 1851. The foot had been lying in a fence, while another foot was found by Harry Layton, a greengrocer, in the churchyard, and was taken by him to the Guildhall. Samuel Moore proved finding pieces of human flesh and bone in Stowger's field, opposite St. Augustine's Church, in June, 1851, and he handed them to the police.

John Flaxman, who was a police-constable at Norwich in 1851, was at the station when a human hand was brought there, and was employed to search for other portions of a body. In Stowger's field he found three pieces of human flesh, which had, in his opinion, come from the breast of a woman.

William Neave said that he found two pieces of flesh, part of the breast and the navel, near this same field, and Charles Grimes, Ambrose Andrews, and Charles Forster also proved finding human remains at about that time, while William Footer, a police-constable in the Norwich force in that year, discovered a piece of flesh, six inches long and two wide, which had sandy hair on it, in a field, which was then—in 1869—called Heigham Road.

Other witnesses spoke to finding pieces of flesh, and Charles Walter Sales stated that he was employed in cleaning out some "cookeys" in Bishopgate Street, which is a continuation of the street where the prisoner resided. These "cookeys" were large iron grates in the nature of a sink, which could be lifted up. He observed that one seemed as if it were full of blood. His father and he emptied the soil with the blood and carried it to Ball Close, where the refuse was thrown. Next day Sturgess, the constable, called on him, and they went to the place where they had thrown the soil and blood, and, after searching, found part of a woman's breast and entrails, the nipple being plainly apparent on the former. James Palmer, while mowing in a field near Hellesdon Road, with two other men, had found a

human thigh bone, but he was unable to say what had become of it, and his two fellow-workers were both dead.

Edward Peck was an inspector of police in June, 1851. He spoke as to a large quantity of the remains of a female being brought to the station, and remembered that they were preserved. He also stated that a shirt and a waistcoat, both blood-stained, were brought to him at the station at about that time. With regard to the remains, they were kept for about a month in the earthen and glass vessels in which they were deposited, and then buried in a vault under the Guildhall. They were afterwards exhumed in his presence, and he swore that they were the same remains. He noticed that the hands and feet were rather small. He remembered that a handbill was circulated at the time offering a reward for information which might lead to the identity of the victim and the detection of the murderer. Several applications were made in regard to missing females, and he had some faint recollection about a young factory girl who was said to have rather mysteriously disappeared.

After this came the medical evidence, and William Peter Nicholls, surgeon in Norwich, was called, and testified that he remembered being asked in June, 1851, to examine some remains, which were the same, he believed, as those he had recently examined. At the initial examination, on June 21, he had the assistance of Dr. Dalrymple and Mr. Norgate, and they came to the conclusion that the remains belonged to a female, an adult. They did not think the victim was an old person, and they came to the conclusion that she was 26 or 27 years old, but at the same time the appearance of the skin and flesh was not inconsistent with the age being as much as 54. The woman had probably been in good health and well-cared for, and she must have had a very delicate skin and a very fair complexion. It struck him that the feet, the hands, and the pelvis—all of which undoubtedly belonged to one body—had been immersed in some fluid, possibly hot water. The pelvis had been rudely sawn through, first in one direction and then in another, in two pieces, which did not meet, and then it was broken up, which was certainly not the work of any student in a dissecting-room. The woman could not have been more than five feet one or two inches in height, and was probably less. Death appeared, when the first foot was examined on June 21, to have taken place within a week. (In his confession at the Walworth Police Station Sheward gave the date June 15 as that on which he had killed his wife.)

The doctor's theories were not shaken in cross-examination, although counsel for the defence was naturally anxious to bind him down to his surmise as to the probable age of the woman, for Mrs. Sheward must have been over fifty at the time of her disappearance. Dr. Nicholls expressed no doubt but that the remains were those of a female, although Mr. Metcalfe pressed the point that they might have been those of a man.

Dr. Dalrymple, who assisted the last witness at the examination of the remains, was then called, and he stated that there was nothing inconsistent with the portions of the body being portions of a woman of the age of 54. In cross-examination he adhered to this opinion more or less, and stated that when he first viewed the remains he thought that death had taken place about two weeks previously.

Then came the evidence of relatives of the missing Mrs. Sheward. Hannah Lane said that the prisoner married her aunt, whose name was Martha, and that they lived in St. Giles's, London. The witness used to visit them as a child, and she remembered that she went to see them afterwards in Norwich, just before the exhibition of 1851. She saw her aunt, Mrs. Sheward, on that occasion, but had never seen or heard from her since then. In 1857 she went to see the prisoner in King Street, Norwich, and, though he was then living with his present wife, she did not question him at all about her aunt.

Dorothy Hewitt, a very old woman, said she was a sister of the deceased, whom she had seen for the last time when the Shewards resided in Bar Street. "That was about eighteen years ago," she said, "and I have not heard from her since." She went, long afterwards, to the prisoner's house in King Street, and said, "I shall be very much obliged Mr. Sheward, if you will tell me where my sister is." He said, "Mrs. Hewitt, she can write to you if she likes." The witness said that her sister was a very light-complexioned woman. The cross-examination took the line that Mrs. Sheward had once lived in Chancery Lane with a gentleman named Worseldine, but the witness seemed to know nothing of the matter, and, although it was suggested several times in the course of the trial that Mrs. Sheward went by the name of Worseldine, it is not at this time easy to conjecture what good the admission—had it been made—would have done the prisoner's case.

William Bunn, a labourer, was then called, and he said that he knew the prisoner. He, Bunn, had married Mrs. Sherward's sister, Mary. In 1851 he heard that the prisoner and his wife had separated, and he went to see Sheward in regard to the rumour. The witness went to the house in King Street, and said to the prisoner, "Will you be so kind as to tell me the last words she said to you?" He said that his wife had said, when she was in the train, "I will not write to you or my sister; never!" Nothing more was then said, but Bunn noticed that the prisoner's hand shook very much as he was cutting the meat for dinner, and he asked him what was the matter. The prisoner had never made any inquiry as to whether Bunn or his wife had heard of or from the missing woman. Bunn's wife—who was dead—was a twin-sister to the prisoner's wife, and they were very much alike. Mrs. Bunn was a fair woman, with golden hair and a light complexion; she had very small hands and feet, and her height was 5ft. 1in.

Eva Hewitt was called and she proved to be a niece of Mrs. Sheward's. While the prisoner lived in King Street she used to visit him and his second wife constantly. In 1862 he visited her at St. Faith's, and her aunt, Mrs. Nunn,

Ran the razor into her throat.

said to him, "What have you done with my sister?" He said, "I have done nothing with your sister; she went away and left me penniless." Mrs. Nunn remarked at this, "You are a false man—my sister never went away and left you!"

It must be noted at this stage that a Mrs. Fisher had died in 1853, and this woman left a small sum of money to the sisters of Mrs. Sheward. One of them, Mrs. Bunn, wrote to acquaint the prisoner with the fact, and he replied in a letter, dated March 24, 1853, as follows:

> "Mrs. Bunn,—I am sorry to hear of Mrs. Fisher's death, but your sister not being in Norwich at this present, I shall not take any part in arranging of affairs; therefore you need not expect me nor send to me any more.—
> —William Sheward."

There was a little money due to Mrs. Sheward at the death of this Mrs. Fisher, and the prisoner said to a John Francis, who married yet another sister of the deceased, "Very well, I'll tell her when I see her."

Sarah Batson declared that in 1850 she went to live in a house in Tabernacle Street, St. Martin's-at-Palace, Norwich, and, after her confinement in January, 1851, she found that the house next hers, previously unoccupied, had been let to a man and a woman. The woman was fair-complexioned, and had golden hair in ringlets. The witness saw her last on Whit-Sunday, June 8, 1851, when she took in to her part of some custard she had been making. She

never saw her afterwards, but she saw the man, who was the prisoner in the dock. Mr. Batson gave similar evidence, and said he saw the house shut up soon after Whitsuntide. Tabernacle Street was the chief thoroughfare from Norwich to the eastern parts, and the house which the prisoner inhabited was situated at about the centre of the street.

John Bird said that at the half-quarter after Midsummer, 1851, the prisoner had hired of him three unfurnished rooms, saying that he was then living at St. Martin's-at-Palace. At Michaelmas the prisoner came to live in these rooms alone, but the present Mrs. Sheward used to come to visit him some two or three months after he took possession, and from what the witness had observed in their conduct, he gave him notice to quit about February, 1853. A twelvemonth later the prisoner was living in King Street with the present Mrs. Sheward. In cross-examination witness admitted that the present Mrs. Sheward was not the first or the only woman who came to his rooms to see the prisoner.

Several other witnesses were called to speak to their knowledge of the second Mrs. Sheward, who had served as nursemaid to a Mr. Frank Colley, in King Street, and of the prisoner's acquaintance and intimacy with her since 1851, it being the theory of the prosecution that his amour with this girl was the motive for the murder. The certificates of the prisoner's two marriages—that between him and Martha Francis, on October 26, 1836, and that between him and the second wife—were then put in and read, and that closed the case for the prosecution.

Mr. Metcalfe then addressed the jury for the prisoner. He reminded them that the confession made by the prisoner in London had been revoked, and that he now declared it to be untrue. He dwelt upon the improbability of the prisoner making away with his wife in the manner supposed in a house situated in a row in a crowded suburb. There was no evidence of murder or of where the body could have been cut up. As for the discovery of the remains in the way alleged, what was more probable than that they formed portions of a subject used for dissection by an unskilled hand? He also pointed out the utter absence of any corroboration of the prisoner's statement against himself. Mr. Baron Piggott summed up, and the jury, after an hour and a quarter's deliberation, found the prisoner guilty, whereupon he was sentenced to death.

It is satisfactory to know that Sheward made a full confession of his guilt before his execution, the more so since some doubt was felt at the time—and has even been expressed since then—whether he had really killed his wife at all. At the time of the Coronation there appeared in a many-paged edition of one of the London evening papers a brief account of a few crimes of the century, and the writer, who could not have made himself acquainted with the facts, declared that Sheward was hanged simply by reason of his "drunken confession," and that it is common knowledge now that he never committed any murder at all! This gentleman could not have taken the trouble to properly go into the case, and Sheward's horrible confession, written just a week before his execution, leaves no doubt that his wife met with her death at his hands.

His statement is dated "City Gaol, Norwich, April 13, 1869, 2.45 p.m.," and it commences with some reference to a box of money deposited by the prisoner with a Mr. Christie, and in regard to which Sheward and his wife had some dispute. He goes on to say that on Sunday morning, June 15, 1851, he was going to Yarmouth, on business, and that his wife said, "You shall not go. I will go to Mr. Christie and get the box of money myself, and bring it home." A quarrel commenced between them. Sheward says, "I ran the razor into her throat. She never spoke after. I then covered an apron over her head and went to Yarmouth. I came home at night and slept on the sofa downstairs. On the Monday I went to work. I left home at four o'clock and went home. The house began to smell very faint. With that I made a fire in the bedroom; and commenced to mutilate the body. Kept on until half-past nine p.m. I then took some portions of the body and threw it away, arriving home at half-past ten. That night slept on the sofa again. Went to work again the next day; went home in the afternoon about four o'clock and did the same. The same night again.

"On Wednesday carried some more portions in a pail-basket to another part of the city. Thursday: Work same and returned early. The head had been previously put in a saucepan and put on the fire to keep the stench away. I then broke it up and distributed it about Thorpe; came home and emptied the pail in the 'cookey' in Bishopgate Street, with the entrails, etc. I then put the hands and feet into the same saucepan, in hopes that they might boil to pieces. On Friday I went to work and went home early and disposed of all the remains of the body, hands and feet included, because I knew I should not be able to be at home on the Saturday till late. On Sunday morning I burnt all the sheets, nightgown, pillow-cases and bed-tick, and all that had any blood about them. The blankets, where there was any blood, I cut in small pieces and distributed them about the city. . . . The long hair on my return from Thorpe, I cut with a pair of scissors into small pieces, and they blew away as I walked along. I also state I never saw or knew my present wife until June 21, 1852, twelve months after the occurrence. I hereby give authority to place the above facts before the Home Secretary and Baron Piggott, but I request that this may not be published at present." Then follow the names of the three witnesses to this worthy confession.

Sheward was hanged in Norwich Castle on April 20, 1869. He showed every token of penitence and spoke of the justice of his punishment.

No one who has carefully studied the facts can come to any other conclusion than that the remains found were those of Mrs. Sheward, and that she had been cruelly murdered—possibly without premeditation, let it be said—by her husband, and that conscience had compelled him to make a clean breast of it at last. It was a strange case, and is remembered well in Norwich to this day.

A Smart Slave-dealing Transaction.

In the year 1759 two young fellows, brothers, named Robert and William Hanson, left England for Jamaica. They were blacksmiths by trade, but, finding, soon after their arrival, that they could do nothing without a little capital, hit upon a novel plan of "raising the wind."

One of them (William) stripped himself naked, and the other shaved him close, blackened him from head to foot with a composition the exact shade of a negro's skin, and which would not rub off except by the application of soap and hot water, tied a cloth round his middle, and covered his head with a woolly wig. He then took him to a slave dealer, who, after viewing and approving him, for he was a fine, stalwart young fellow, paid the vendor eighty pounds for him, and congratulated himself on his bargain, believing he had the finest negro in the island. The same evening the newly-manufactured "slave" made his escape to his brother's house, washed himself clean, and resumed his former appearance. Rewards for his apprehension were offered in vain—the bloodhounds could not find any scent, pursuit was eluded, and all trace of the missing "negro" completely lost.

The brothers commenced business with their ingeniously obtained capital, prospered, and ultimately returned to England with a fortune of £20,000. Previous, however, to their departure, they waited on the slave-dealer whom they had defrauded, and, recalling the circumstance to his recollection, paid him principal and interest, with thanks.

Origin of Coroner's Inquests.

For that useful regulation, the Coroner's Inquest, by which no corpse that comes by a sudden or violent death, or which was not attended during the last illness by a qualified medical practitioner, can be interred without a legal inspection, we are indebted to the following circumstance:

A lady in London, after having buried six husbands, found a gentleman, a Mr. Wainwright, who was willing to become her seventh spouse. For some months their happiness was mutual, and she informed her husband that her former partners had disgusted her by their sottishness and infidelity. In order to discover the real character of his amorous partner the husband used frequently to absent himself from home, to return at late hours, and when he did return to appear as if intoxicated. His conduct was at first met with reproaches and then with threats. He, however, persisted, and seemed every day more and more addicted to the bottle. At length, one evening, when she imagined him dead drunk, she unsewed a leaden weight from one of the sleeves of her gown, and, having melted it, approached her husband (who pretended to be still sound asleep) in order to pour the molten metal into his ear through a short piece of iron pipe. Convinced of her wickedness, he started up and seized her, and, having procured assistance, secured her till morning, when she was conducted before a magistrate, who committed her to prison. The bodies of her six husbands were then exhumed, and it was discovered that all of them had had molten lead poured into their ears. The proof of her guilt was so strong upon her trial that she was condemned to be executed, and in due course suffered the extreme penalty of the law.

THE WAYS OF THE CRIMINAL

XXII.—MORE PLACES WHERE "SWAG" HAS BEEN STOWED.

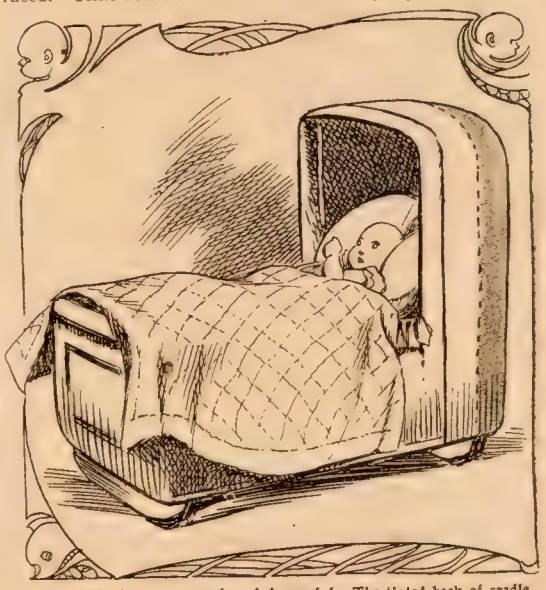
THIEVES have but little respect for anything living or inanimate but their own selves. The ordinary man who goes to the trouble and expense of stuffing a pet dog and placing it under a glass-case, has a kind of veneration for all that remains of his canine companion. "Ah," says he, when he thinks of the many miles he has walked with his four-footed chum, "those were good times, and you were a good pal; always cheery and with a wag of the tail whenever I came home." The thief, however, turns his stuffed pet to other than ornamental uses.

Our artist's illustration shows them. There is the little terrier in its glass mausoleum, looking, except for his glazed eyes, as innocent of guile as he did when he romped about at his master's heels. But apply the X-rays or Radium to his body, and if his master has been "operating," his "inwards" will show that he is not quite as innocent as he looks. He is, in fact, a hollow fraud most of his time. For the rest, he is a receiver of stolen property, and therefore in the eyes of the law worse than the thief who happens to be his master. His grizzled head screws off at the neck and reveals a gaping hole cosily lined with cotton wool. Sometimes the sparkle of precious stones can be seen in his interior, for it is there that his master conceals his plunder after a successful night's burglary. Poor doggie! Your mortal remains are put to base uses!

How a faithful servant served his unworthy master after death. The head, screwed off, revealing entrance to the hollow "innards."

And then imagine the depraved state of the mind of a man who will press a baby into his service to enable him to secrete the spoil of his midnight raid on a sleeping household. There the baby lies in his cradle, asleep or innocently cooing; or again, and more likely, howling for his dinner, whilst beneath the mattress is enough jewellery to stock a shop. The back of his cradle, too, is but a sham. The curtains serve to conceal other plunder. The man who adopted this method of hiding his "swag" was, however, just a little too clever. He lived in a tenement house in a mean street in Hoxton, and knowing that the police would in all probability pay him a domiciliary visit, he was at a loss to conceal the stuff he had during the early hours of the morning taken from the shop of a West-end jeweller. Living on the same landing were a young woman and her baby—the husband was in prison—and these he quickly pressed into his service, transferring them to his own room.

When the detectives arrived, neither of them thought of looking into the cradle, which had been hurriedly rigged up with its curtains, until the young woman walked into the room. Then one of the officers recognised her as the wife of the man in gaol, and knowing her to be "straight," was immediately suspicious. He questioned her, and she indignantly denied the reason put forward by the officer for her presence in the thief's room, and this statement increasing the suspicion, the detective looked thoughtfully towards the cradle. The thief gave a start, and the woman looked confused. That settled the matter. Picking up the baby, the

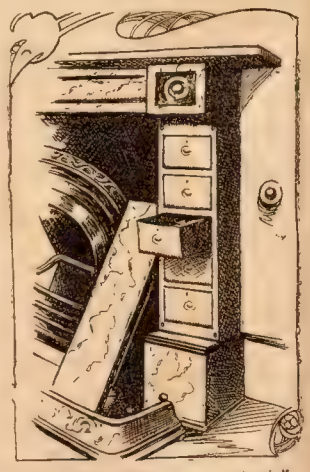


The criminal can even make a baby useful. The tinted back of cradle is a "cave."

"tec" handed it to its mother, and forthwith drew out the jewels he was in search of. The moral of the story is obvious.

Thieves, however, have not aways been so haphazard as the criminal just referred to. Some years ago the police suspected that a certain man was doing a tremendous trade as a "fence." It was noticed that he had a heavy foreign correspondence, that he made frequent trips to the country, coming back laden with baskets of flowers in the summer and ferns and evergreens in the winter, and that he was living in great style without apparently doing much work. He, it is true, ran a small shop some distance from the house in which he lived, but the takings here were not sufficient to enable him to keep up the swagger establishment in which he was residing.

Once or twice he was seen in the company of known thieves, thus strengthening the suspicions against him, and twice search warrants were executed at his house and shop. On neither occasion, however, was anything found, and the detectives retired discomfited. But they were not done with. Though satisfied themselves as to the manner in which their man was making money, they could not get any legal proof, and their two failures spurred them to greater efforts. All their watching and inquiries, however, went for naught, and it was some months later before success rewarded their efforts.

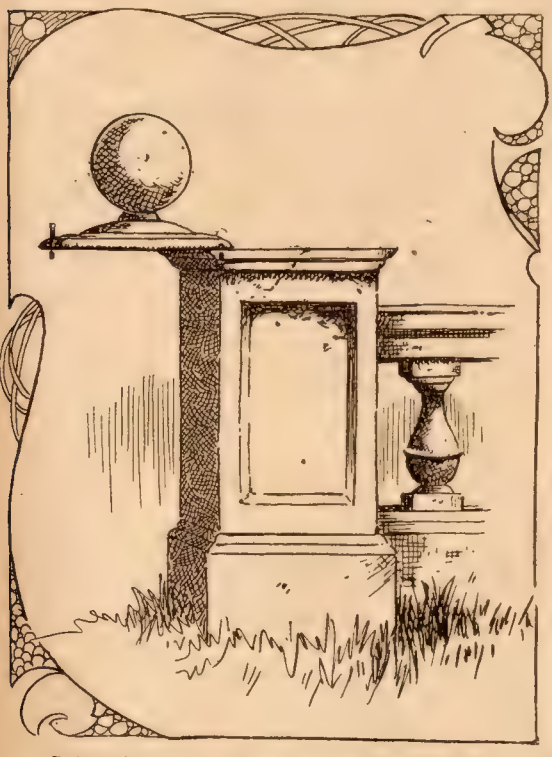


The chimney corner. A "receiver's" secret safe.

And it was a woman who gave the game away. The receiver, fickle in his love affairs, jilted the girl, who swore revenge. Meeting one of the detectives, she chaffed him at his want of success, and as she went on her way, winked and said, "Look in the garden pedestals."

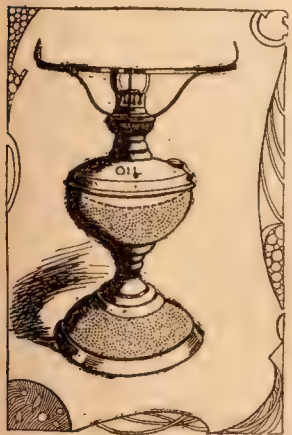
The hint was quite sufficient. The receiver was again watched, and one evening, shortly after he had returned from one of his country trips, the detectives again called upon him. So as not to give the girl away, they spent a lot of time hunting round the house. Floors were inspected, walls were sounded for concealed cupboards, and every nook and corner

was turned out. One of the detectives idly tapped on the marble panel by the side of the fireplace in one of the reception rooms. It gave out a somewhat hollow sound, and still idly,



Daring and ingenious. A hollow corner-post with sliding top.

remembering the hint about the pedestals, the officer cast his eyes up and down the marble. It appeared to him to be a little loose, and he gave it a smart tug. Judge of his surprise when the panel fell away in his hand and revealed a nest of drawers running from top to bottom of the fireplace. Here was a find indeed. A rapid inspection revealed that the drawers were stuffed with valuables. In some were precious stones which had been torn from their settings, and in others were crumpled pieces of gold which had once formed parts of watches, rings, etc.



How the domestic lamp was pressed into service. The tinted portions unscrewed, and formed receptacles for small valuables.

Immediately the man was placed under arrest, and one of the officers went into the garden to inspect the pedestals. One of these proved to be the real thing, solid and respectable, like a City alderman. The other, however, was very different. Close inspection revealed the fact that the top of the pedestal swung round on a pivot, being fastened in place by a small piece of iron, cunningly let into the stone. Inside there was a big hollow, and here were found two of the bouquets from the country. Each of them concealed small parcels of stolen goods, one lot being the proceeds of a burglary, and the other the haul of a pickpocket.

Unfortunately the receiver managed to evade his deserts, for on the way to the police-station he tore himself from the grasp of his captors, and was seen no more. It is believed that he committed suicide by drowning, for nothing has since been heard of him. His modus operandi was now perfectly clear to the police. His journeys to the country were made for the purpose of meeting burglars and travelling pickpockets, who, in exchange for coin of the realm, transferred to him the stuff which they had purloined in their wanderings. He, in turn, brought it to London, broke it up, and then sent the jewels to Holland by post, receiving from his agent there 75 per cent. of what the stones realised.

The actual thieves received about 20 per cent. of the value of the jewels which they had risked their liberty to obtain. It was altogether a remarkably well organised business, and, but for the girl's jealousy, might have still been flourishing. This man, it may be mentioned, commenced life as a builder, and made his secret hiding-places himself.

A well-known receiver, who also committed suicide some years ago, did so under a misapprehension. He used to hide some of the stolen property which he dealt with under the window-sill in his back office. One morning, on going to inspect his stock, he found the hiding-place cleared of the whole of its contents. For the moment he was staggered, but, quickly pulling himself together, he went about his legitimate business. He did not know what to think about the missing stuff, but there was at the back of his mind a lurking suspicion that the police had been to his office and found it. Later in the day a detective called to make an inquiry and leave the police list of stolen property. The receiver watched the detective approach, and, thinking that he was about to be arrested, retired to the back room and took a dose of poison, dying a short time afterwards. As a matter of fact the police, though they were carefully watching the man (who had previously served a heavy sentence for dealing with the proceeds of burglaries), knew

Some Queer Hiding Methods.

The black portions in Nos. 1, 2, 4, and 6 indicate where the spoil was stored. 3. A hollowed brick, plastered over and thrown on a refuse heap. 4. A French idea—the hollow pincushion. 5. Trinkets don't melt at boiling point—hence this scheme. 6. An oilcan with detachable bottom chamber. The upper part contained petroleum, the lower stolen jewels, carefully padded in cotton wool.

nothing of his hiding-place, which had been rifled by a well-known burglar, who is now quarrying at Dartmoor.

The lamp which we illustrate has been used on many occasions. As shown in the illustration, it will be seen that the oil reservoir is divided into two parts. The top half is

used for its legitimate purposes, but the bottom half is an artful hiding-place for stolen jewels, etc. The parts are screwed together, and practically defy detection. The base of the lamp, which to a casual inspection appears to be solid, is, however, not what it seems. It is hollow, and, of course, a very handy place to hide things. The accidental lifting of a lamp by a detective some few weeks ago put the officer on the track of a jewel thief who was much "wanted." The lamp in this case was standing on the chest of drawers in the room of a woman with whom the thief was acquainted. When the lamp was raised the detective saw a handsome ring (part of the stolen property) which the thief had given to the girl, who, by the way, knew nothing of the crime.

Similar to the lamp, a hollowed-out brick has before now served to conceal "swag." The brick, however, had been carefully prepared, and when danger threatened the stuff was placed inside, after which the brick was thrown on to a rubbish heap in the back garden, where a number of other similar bits of baked clay found a resting place. The hollow pincushion shown in one of the illustrations has also served a similar purpose on many occasions, and the old boot once upon a time found its worn toe stuffed with a fat wad of banknotes, stolen outside the Bank of England from a country gentleman, who was gazing with much admiration at the policeman regulating the traffic.

Perhaps the meanest method of concealing plunder was that adopted some months ago by an old convict. He fell in love, or pretended to do so, with a young girl, and told her that he was engaged in business in the City. He proposed marriage, was accepted, and thereafter made many plans for the future. Every now and then he brought to the girl handsome pieces of silver-plate, which he described as wedding presents, and these were stored away until the eventful day should arrive.

Before that time, however, a detective appeared on the scene, and the sequel to this romance of real life was told at the Old Bailey.

Branded or Hanged for Begging.

In pre-Reformation days the monasteries were the general dispensers of alms, the poor-laws were practically unnecessary. The ravages of the plague, however, rendered it necessary at times to restrict begging, and this was done by making it penal to give alms, save through the medium of the poor-box. The dissolution of the monasteries threw a large horde of clerics on the country, and at the same time the poor, who had been supported by the monks, were left destitute. To remedy (?) this evil, the kindly-hearted King Henry VIII. enacted that no one should give alms! He wished to starve his surplus population. The charitable man was fined ten times the amount of his alms, and the receiver was flogged for the first offence. Should he be caught a second time his ears were cropped, and after his third misdemeanour he was accounted incorrigible and hanged. Henry's son, the sixth Edward, altered this law, ordaining that whoever was caught begging was to be branded, and anyone who gave information against a beggar might take him as a slave for two years. If the slave attempted to escape he might be hanged. Elizabeth, seeing that her sister had ameliorated the lot of the needy, saw fit to order that anybody thrice convicted of asking for alms might be hanged, if over eighteen years of age. These laws were excessively brutal, for it must be remembered that there was no legal channel through which the necessities of the indigent might be relieved.

Hanging Abolished in England.

It may be news to some of our readers to learn that there was a time when capital punishment was abolished in England. William the Conqueror, being averse to taking life except in warfare, ordered that no person should be hanged or otherwise put to death in his dominions, for any offence whatever. His humanity manifested itself, however, in his ordaining that instead of being hanged or beheaded, the wretched criminals should have their limbs lopped off, their eyes plucked out, or blinded with hot irons, their tongues torn out by the roots, or their bones crushed to pulp. The rudimentary knowledge of surgery which obtained in those days was limited to treating everything in the nature of a wound with boiling oil; and it is small wonder that the convicts died lingering deaths after being punished. William Rufus was also averse to the infliction of the death penalty, but Henry I. substituted the swift death by axe or rope for the long and painful one by mortification. He did not, however, abolish mutilation, though he modified it a little, confining the operations of the law to cropping ears, searing eyes, and occasionally chopping off a hand or a foot. Since 1100 A.D. the death penalty has been enforced in England, and is likely long to remain on the Statute Book, unless some efficient substitute be discovered which will render it possible for us to dispense with it.

The Assassination of De la Rue, at Hampstead.

COLD-BLOODED MURDER COMMITTED BY THE COOL-HANDED HOCKER.

"Fear the boisterous savage of passions less than the sedately grinning villain."
—LAVATER.

PART II.

AFTER the formal charge preferred against Henry Thomas Hocker for the murder of Mr. James De la Rue in Belsize Lane, Hampstead, on Saturday, February 21, 1845, the interest became most intense, and the excitement all over London and in the provinces increased. Little did I think when I, by accident, came upon the scene shortly after the finding of the body of the victim that it was likely to develop into such an important affair, keeping me on the trot, and alert for so long a period.

It must be remembered that in those days the inquest and the examination before the magistrate were both going on at the same time, and so carelessly was the evidence of witnesses prepared that no end of contradictions were the result, so that what impressions you might have as to the innocence or the guilt of the accused by reading the proceedings before the coroner at the Yorkshire Grey tavern in Hampstead would be materially upset after the perusal of the report of the examination before Mr. Rawlinson, the magistrate at Marylebone police-office. Besides, it was a far cry from one place to the other, and, what with preparing reports from one and the other, and analysing the many voluntary statements which were pouring in from all quarters, it may be pretty well imagined that we reporters had quite enough on hand. Moreover, the quantity of material I had to deal with was so great that it was difficult to cut it down, even for long reports at the time, so I shall on this occasion but deal with the essential thread of the story, and touch outside that only upon incidents in connection with this extraordinary crime with which I came in personal contact.

It will be necessary, therefore, to leave the inquest upon the murdered man out of our story, although there were many exciting developments which did not come out at the trial. It was very painful in many respects, especially the evidence of the prisoner's father and that of his brother James—who, it will be remembered, had been arrested, but was afterwards discharged—every word of information elicited by them telling greatly against the prisoner.

At the conclusion of the inquest, when the jury brought in their verdict of "Wilful murder against Thomas Henry Hocker," without retiring, I shall never forget the coolness displayed by the accused. His father, who was deeply affected, was, together with his brother James and a few friends, allowed to see him. Their grief was excessive, and everybody, in fact, appeared affected but the prisoner himself. He declared that he should conduct his own defence, as he had no money to waste upon counsel, and, whilst chat-

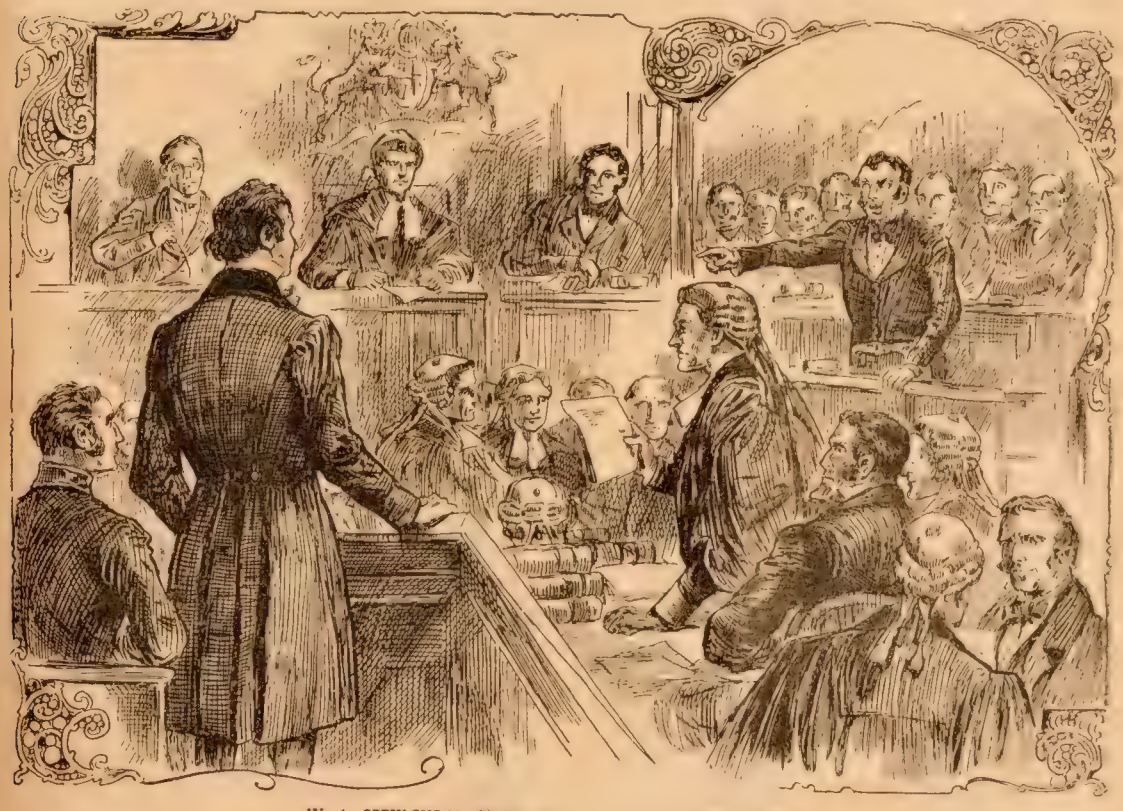
ting away quite gaily, handed round his snuff-box, and took frequent and copious pinches himself. He was taken to the New Prison, and, as I learned afterwards, astonished all the warders there by his cheerful, indifferent style. The head-clerk, who passed him into the custody of Mr. Kilsby, the governor, exclaimed to Sergeant Redmayne, "God bless me, Redmayne, I do not know what murders will come to now. Here is a man brought in on a verdict of wilful murder, and he has come in smiling!"

On the following day Hocker was again placed in the dock at the police-court, and, with a few exceptions, the evidence was a repetition of that given before the coroner at the last hearing. It looked very black against the prisoner. Yet thousands of people thought him innocent, and the extraordinary demeanour he preserved certainly gave none of us the impression that the prisoner was a guilty man. One remarkable incident occurred before the end of the final examination before the magistrate.

One of his witnesses was called to prove that he was not

The interest in the affair still increased, and much was published about the life that was led by this gay young spark. Here is a little story about him which will show the character of the man, and which, as my readers will presently see, formed a step to his ultimate downfall. It came to me through the detectives, and I had the pleasure of meeting the young lady who played the chief part in the little romance. She was a charming girl of about 22, who came from Cromer, in Norfolk, and had been in London only some two or three years. Her name was Philips, and she was under the guardianship of a lady, Mrs. Edwards, of Bath Place.

Some ten weeks before the murder this young lady was walking alone down St. Martin's Lane, and was accosted by a well-dressed young fellow, but she hurriedly passed along and, without exchanging a word, avoided him. About three weeks afterwards the same individual met her in the New Road. He again accosted her, and she once more refused to enter into conversation with him. He, however, followed her to her residence and, as she was opening the



IN A SEPULCHRAL TONE SAID, "THAT IS THE MAN!"

the man who was served at the Swiss Cottage tavern on the night of the crime, and answering the description of the supposed murderer. It was the waiter. He said, "A man came into the parlour and asked for a glass of rum-and-water; he paid me out of a shilling, and I noticed he wore a dark cloak. I have looked at the prisoner, and he is not the man."

Prisoner (with a very peculiar smile): "I am the man."

Mr. Rawlinson (astonished): "Why, this is the witness you called for!"

Prisoner: "I have no witnesses. I want the thing to be correct. I am the man."

All through Hocker carried on very gaily, and, as he did at the inquest, offered his snuff-box right and left. And, strange to say, it was in frequent requisition, and many seemed honoured by taking it. Such a thing, under the same circumstances, would scarcely be permitted in a police-court to-day.

Sufficient evidence against him had been adduced for Mr. Rawlinson to fully commit him upon his own and the coroner's warrant to take his trial for wilful murder at the Central Criminal Court.

gate, uttered some expression of attachment to her, begging permission to accompany her into the house. She resented the proposal, when he exclaimed:

"By heavens, miss, I will see you at home!"

She, considerably alarmed, entered the house, but said nothing to Mrs. Edwards, her guardian, about what had passed. In an hour afterwards the ardent admirer called and knocked at the door, the maid-servant answering it, and inquired his name and who he wanted. He told her the young lady who resided there, and at the same time produced a visiting-card, upon which was engraved: "Mr. Thomas Henry Hocker."

"Oh, Miss Philips, you mean," observed the maid.

"Ay, Miss Philips," he replied, delighted at learning the name. "Will you give her my card, if you please?"

Not knowing the name of the young man who had twice accosted her in the street, Miss Philips, when the card was handed to her, had no idea that it was the same person. Not wishing, therefore, to go down to see a gentleman whose name she had never heard before, she requested Mrs. Edwards to do so. That lady readily complied, because the idea flashed across her mind that the person might have

entered for the purpose of stealing some articles from the room whilst the maid was upstairs, for the girl had foolishly asked him into the sitting-room.

On entering, Mrs. Edwards desired to know his pleasure. He coolly answered that he had seen Miss Philips several times and, being quite fascinated by her, he had called for permission to pay his addresses to her. Mrs. Edwards was, as might be expected, quite confounded at this. On recovering her presence of mind, she said to him, "This, sir, is very strange conduct on the part of one whom neither Miss Philips nor I, who am her guardian, know anything, and even of whose name we have never heard before."

"You may rely on it, madam," remarked Hocker, "that I am a person of respectability, and that my intentions are honourable. My parents reside at 17, Charles Street, Portland Town."

Strange as were the circumstances under which this man introduced himself, there was something so sincere in his manner and, according to these ladies' account, so much of gentlemanly bearing about him, that Mrs. Edwards eventually called down Miss Philips. She, naturally, at first, met his protestations of love with repulse, but before she had been a quarter of an hour in his company, she began to feel greatly influenced by his exceedingly winning manner. The interview ended in his obtaining both Mrs. Edwards's and Miss Philips's consent to his calling again on the following day, Mrs. Edwards in the interval taking the precaution to ascertain that his parents did reside at the address he had given.

After this it was proved, without doubt, that he was about with other girls. Yet he still courted the society of Miss Philips, making the most lying statements as to his position, until the intimacy between them became so great that really a marriage was talked about.

I have gone into the particulars of this episode in Hocker's career not only to demonstrate what sort of a man he was, but to prove that, as most frequently is the case, a deception like this invariably ends in supplying a link in the chain of evidence against such a rascal.

But let us return to the story, and give a brief outline of the trial that was, in spite of the coolness and ingenuity of the accused, to end very quickly in a condemnation.

In the meanwhile the interest in the matter had by no means abated. The Yorkshire Grey, where the inquest had been held, was doing tremendous business, and the takings were quadrupled. The spot upon which the unfortunate man had been murdered was visited daily by thousands of people, and on the Sunday following Hocker's committal, hundreds of the fair sex might be seen wending their way, up to their ancles in mire in Haverstock Field, to gratify their morbid curiosity. Depredations were carried on, and not only large pieces of the stile or railing over which the dead man was supposed to have been crossing when he was murdered were cut away, but even large portions of the brickwork of the ancient wall of Belsize Park, against which the corpse of De la Rue was found, had been removed. It was done to such an extent that quite extensive repairs were afterwards necessary to place it again in safe condition.

On April 11 the trial of Thomas Henry Hocker commenced at the Old Bailey, before Mr. Justice Coleridge and Mr. Justice Coleman. Mr. Bodkin and Mr. Chambers conducted the prosecution; Mr. Clarkson and Mr. Ballantine defended the prisoner.

The appearance of the court I have already described in the opening of the story. All the City magnates and many celebrities were present, and the justice room was crowded inconveniently. Mr. Bodkin opened the case for the Crown by having a "slap" at the newspaper reports, begging that the jury would disabuse their minds from all prepossessions that might have been created by many statements with which the newspapers had been full. He was certainly right in doing so, for the liberty of the Press during and before a trial in those days were very great, and some of the reporters did not forget to invest their accounts with a deal of colour—so much so that if it were done nowadays it would undoubtedly be followed by imprisonment.

The learned counsel proceeded to lay before the Court an outline of the case in a lucid and masterly manner. An abridged report from the notes which I made at the time will suffice for my readers.

He first called attention to the strange circumstance of the prisoner's return to the body of his victim, which had been proved without doubt, and declared that it must have been actuated by some of those inexplicable motives which so frequently influence the conduct of persons guilty of great crimes. There was also another fact that he felt it his duty to call most particular attention to, and which he believed had caused great sensation. He understood that there was no money or property of any kind found upon the person of the deceased, but there had been found in the coat pocket a letter of a most extraordinary character, which it was his duty to lay before them, because he should prove it to be beyond doubt in the handwriting of the prisoner at the bar.

This was the letter, purporting to have been written by "Caroline," the contents of which I have already placed before my readers.

Mr. Bodkin said that witnesses would prove this, and there was still further evidence to show that there had been found in the lodging of the prisoner the same coloured ink, as well as some paper of the same size and quality, besides a quantity of medallion seals, with the letter "F" upon them, the same as the one by which the letter had been originally secured. The letter was addressed to "James Cooper, Hampstead Road," and he (Mr. Bodkin) might here stop to say that it would be shown the prisoner had been in the habit of corresponding with the deceased Mr. De la Rue by the name of Mr. Cooper, and that he was in the habit of so addressing letters intended for the deceased. The letter was then read.

The learned counsel then declared that it was no part of his duty to enter into any speculations as to what had been the object or motive which actuated the writer. He could only say that no such person as "Caroline" had been made out or discovered. He made no comment on this letter, but left the jury to draw any inference or satisfactory hypothesis from it they could.

Witnesses were then called for the prosecution, but I shall not attempt to enter into their examination and cross-examination. It would be but of little interest to my readers. As the trial proceeded it was evident that each witness was armed with such information that served to drive nail after nail into the prisoner's coffin, although he disregarded the most important items against him. The most extraordinary part of his behaviour was, though he seemed the last man to give way to despair, to say to himself, "It's all up!" he had the appearance of one who was confident of proving his innocence, in spite of all that could be brought against him.

Hilton, the baker, was first called, and proved that, after the alarm was given on the night of the murder, he visited the body, and there saw the prisoner.

Baldock, the police-officer, proved that he had picked up several articles, and was also certain that Hocker was the man who accosted him in the cloak.

Another officer said he had found a heavy, knobbed stick, which was used, it was believed, to commit the crime, and

William Latherthwaite, who had picked the prisoner out from ten others, pointed dramatically to the dock, and, in a sepulchral tone, said, "That's the man!" He then described most graphically how he had held a lantern for Hocker to light his cigar with whilst the body was being taken away, and his face was full to his view, and, being so remarkable, he could never forget it.

Sarah Jane Philips, his sweetheart (broken-hearted), told how she had seen him on the night of the murder with blood on his clothes; how he showed her the watch and ring belonging to De la Rue; and recognised his handwriting by the "Caroline" letter, the blue ink and the initial "F."

James Hocker, the prisoner's brother, had extracted from him evidence that tended to convict, and his poor old father had to corroborate.

A man named Watson, who visited them late on the night of the deed, described Thomas Hocker being at home with his clothes torn, and how they spent a jolly evening, the prisoner singing and being in the best of spirits.

Inspector Partridge procured the bloody clothes belonging to the prisoner, the button which was found near the deceased, which matched those on Thomas Hocker's coat.

Daniel De la Rue identified the ring and watch as his late brother's property, and Mrs. Edwards swore that she had never lent the prisoner money, as had been asserted.

All together, I think I never heard such a long, continuous chain of circumstantial evidence unwound at a trial before, and the cross-examination, although severe, never shook one detail. And all this time the prisoner was perfectly composed.

At this point of the trial there came a most unexpected and sensational statement from the prisoner's counsel. A murmur of surprise when the Court was informed that Hocker had declined the services of his eminent advocates, provided by the Treasury, and had determined to conduct his own defence. How he did it and what effect it had upon the judge and the jury will be presently seen by reading his appeal, which in a condensed form I shall presently quote.

Mr. Justice Coleridge turned to the prisoner and said, "Since I learn that you have elected to defend yourself, and dispense with counsel, perhaps you might like to have a short time to prepare yourself."

"Thank you, my lord; I should just like five minutes." And he disappeared with the warders, tripping lightly down the stairs into the passage that communicates between the prison and the dock. On his return he held in his hands three or four large sheets of MS. For a few minutes he stood quite motionless, as if giving his audience time to settle down, and then proceeded to read two of the most extraordinary papers ever produced by a person in his position. The first would be now of little interest. The second I place before my readers:

"I wish to explain to you as nearly as my feelings will suffer me," he read, "the nature of my present trial, and to show you that to attempt an extrication out of my misery by a full disclosure of everything connected with this sad affair would be futile and fiendish.

"About a year ago I courted a young lady at Hampstead,

The executioner entered.

whose parents were highly genteel and respectable. I felt a great attachment to her; we met and loved in secret. I introduced myself to her parents shortly after my acquaintance with her. She was a beautiful girl, and I felt I should be proud to introduce her to the man whom I looked upon as my very best friend. At length I found an opportunity of doing so. The parents of the girl, finding I had such a friend as De la Rue, invited us both to see them. I had represented De la Rue as a man of property and, in every sense of the word, a gentleman. We frequently afterwards visited the family together. What he lacked in manner and address was compensated by his condition in life, which was so much more favourable than mine. De la Rue betrayed me, and at length, after a long interview with the father, that gentleman refused me as a suitor to his daughter.

"Henceforth De la Rue was the acknowledged lover, though discouraged by the girl's indifference towards him. But time and assiduity accomplished everything. He won her affections at last and proved the genuineness of his heart to me and the girl by seducing her. Yes, such a villain was the man who, though dead, I abhor. And now comes the catastrophe. A short period elapsed, and the parents suspected, by the girl's tears and De la Rue's rude withdrawal, that all was not right, and subsequently the secret was divulged. Oh! picture to yourself the distraction of the parents of an only daughter in such a condition, and the thirsty revenge of an only brother, who had been married honourably but five weeks! Revenge was the theme alone that had any charm for him, and we all determined to have it, for I was dishonoured with the rest. They knew I could forge a lady's handwriting. I penned the note which was found on deceased's person, and sent it by a young woman whom De la Rue knew. He attended to the assignation, and was on the spot where he had effected the ruin of an innocent creature, and where he met his fate. I and the brother accompanied each other till we came to Haverstock Field, when we separated, he to the fatal spot and I to the Swiss Tavern, which we appointed our rendezvous, but not until I had waited about for some time. I myself distinctly heard the cry of 'Murder!' I then knew the scene had commenced, but neither the brother nor I had any presage or thought of the issue. After waiting some time for him at the tavern, I hastened to Haverstock Field. This is the explanation of my anxiety to feel the pulse of the deceased and my shedding tears when I witnessed the result of that revenge, which had not death for its object, but serious mutilation. I hurried to the house of the perpetrator, who had flown there for refuge. I then took the whole upon myself, as I had been the principal cause of the tragedy. I immediately rushed from the house, and sought a slaughter-house in Hampstead, and disfigured my clothes in a pool of blood, which I found handy. You see, gentlemen, I cannot account for the bloody state of my clothes without giving a reason for making them so—here is the difficulty. Oh, God! I could pass through the impending ordeal in unison with my wishes. I have mentioned no names to you; and oh! did you but see the state of my mind! I cannot prove that I was not on the spot at the time of action unless I, to save myself, who am innocent, bring to justice those who as far as intention was concerned, are equally so. Am I sure that by such a course I should be free from imputation? And if they should turn their backs upon me—which it is in their power to do—what then would become of me? I see how I am surrounded by difficulties, and I will not say anything to acquit myself—that is at the best only dubious and which is calculated to involve others in addition to myself. I cannot say more—my mind is almost bewildered."

And so Thomas Hocker finished his defence with what was palpably to all of us purely imaginary—the locality, the persons concerned, the brother, and everything connected with his lying statement.

The jury were not long in considering the verdict, which, of course, was "Guilty," and the judge passed sentence in the usual manner. Still the condemned did not for a moment lose his nerve and composure. What a contrast, as I have already stated, to that wretched Polish Jew, Klosowski, alias Chapman!

I will not dwell upon the incidents after the trial, nor the extraordinary fortitude preserved by the wretched young man whilst awaiting his execution. He had many friends to visit him, and I was in Newgate several times. The days passed only too quickly for him, as he was writing what he declared would be his confession and praying and conversing several hours a day with the Rev. Mr. Davis, the ordinary, for whom he cultivated a great fondness, and which I heard on the best authority was reciprocated.

At length the eventful day drew near. His last appearance before the final upon the gallows was at chapel on the Sunday, to listen to the Rev. Mr. Davis's "condemned sermon." A few pressmen were privileged to be present, and there were several of the sheriffs and under-sheriffs and a few ladies. Of course, the other prisoners confined in the prison attended worship. Hocker was the last to enter, between two warders, and had a chair provided facing the pulpit. Of course he was the observed of all observers. Not changed in the least. The same care about clothes and the dressing of his hair was exhibited. He spoke to one of the warders, who brought him a glass of water, and as he received it he made a polite bow, arranged his books and hassock, and seated himself. He joined in the responses, but once, when his friend the reverend preacher touched upon some tender passage, the tears started to his eyes and he was evidently profoundly touched.

On the Sunday night he retired to rest early. The execution was fixed for 9 a.m., Monday, April 28. One of the warders informed me that he was very restless and constantly murmured, "Mother! mother!" in his sleep. As early as 4 a.m. he arose and dressed. His first occupation was to sit down and write to two girls of his acquaintance. Very touching they are, too, and, although I have copies,

they need not be given here. He partook of a very scanty breakfast, and at seven o'clock he desired to see the prison officials. This request was immediately complied with, and he shook them by the hand and thanked them for their kindness. After this his calmness somewhat deserted him, I afterwards learned, and at 7.15, when the sheriff and undersheriff entered his cell it was a struggle for him to preserve his composure.

Before eight o'clock the surgeon saw him, and the Rev. Mr. Davis visited him. He was supplied with a little stimulant, and appeared to recover in the presence of his religious adviser, to whom he entrusted his confession, with a prayer that it might after his death be disclosed to the world. This is such an extraordinary composition that it cannot fail to interest our readers, so I have condensed as much as possible, and present it to them. It ran as follows:

"Rev. and dear Sir,—This is the last written confession I shall make to the world. My hours are now so few that a babe might count them. Whatever may have been my conduct heretofore, I cannot any longer dissemble. . . Though I be condemned to die on a scaffold, I have yet one tender chord remaining in my bosom. . . . I never did any man a premeditated harm in my life, and God forbid that I should at such a time as this forget to make every acknowledgment in my power while I live for the faithful part you have exercised in my unhappy lot since my incarceration. . . .

"With a quiet and unresentful conscience, and a heart still beating innoence for that which I am unjustly doomed to suffer, I wish to rectify two deviations from truth in the second statement which I read at my trial, or, rather, I should say, to admit their falsity. The manner in which I accounted for my clothes was fictitious. It was an easy matter for me to forget another lie by saying that in stooping down by the body of deceased as he lay dead I came by such an appearance of guilt. But, no, I will not; I cannot die with a falsehood on my lips. In accordance with a spirit of truthfulness, I avow solemnly, in the presence of my God, that the marks were not occasioned by any contact whatever with the person of deceased. I myself did it, after the body was removed by the constables. Can it be that I am indulging in an infidel temerity at such an awful period as this, by asseverating an untruth? No! My conviction of a future judgment and a state of eternal consciousness is so powerful, that I have not wickedness enough to trifle with my Maker and my own soul, at its peril, now that the gallows is in course of erection for my execution. . . .

"My defence has been complimented as an 'idle romance.' . . If it were a 'romance,' it was far from an idle one, for it was begun and finished in twenty minutes, while my solicitor was in waiting. . . As a dying man I have no more motive than that of truth for breaking silence. . . That I am not guilty of murder God and my conscience bear witness, and this I shall be able to shout from my heart on my entrance into eternity. It is the duty of every man to prepare for death. . . .

"A man whom I have treated as my friend is the murderer of De la Rue. His own admission of this fact was the only means of extricating me from this unworthy end. He has not come forward. Had I caused him to be apprehended he would doubtless have denied it. I have been assured that, had I not been found guilty of murder, I should have been transported for life for highway robbery. Such an alternative has failed to induce me to divulge what it is my resolution to die with in my bosom. Let, then, the sentence ring in the murderer's ears—that he is not only the destroyer of De la Rue, but me likewise! I did not lift a hand against deceased. . . I have suffered too much, and am, whilst writing this, too weak and heart-broken to quit this world like an atheist. My sorrows have been more than my strength—great as it has been—could support. I am no longer the same young man who heard sentence of death passed without the distortion of a muscle. My troubles, both sleeping and awake, have so shaken me that I feel it more easy to weep than to smile. Every rising sun dispels the dark mystery of futurity. Already I see death approaching me with increasing strides. At night, when I lay my poor aching head to rest, ere I can close my eyes, rude forms of shame and infamy attend my pillow, and oh! what dreams! One moment and all is passed. I am again at home, every one cheering me with eager hands and hearts at my return—no longer condemned, no longer unhappy. Then to wake and find myself stretched on a hard bed, surrounded by iron bars and gloomy walls that deride my anguish and mock at my distress. . . . Death is the only friend that can make amends for all my wretchedness. Even death on a scaffold—that shameful end. . . . My home and an isolated friend here and there are my only attractions, and I trust I shall meet them soon where all is light and joyous—where the love of God is the only mystery—where holiness and pure intellect go hand in hand; and the tear of gratitude the only tear. May you and I, my dear sir, and all those who are dear to us, be welcomed there, is the dying prayer of

"Your poor, unfortunate and faithful servant,

"T. H. Hocker."

"The Rev. Mr. Davis, Ordinary. April 26, 1845."

Such was the extraordinary composition by the condemned man Hocker, which was in due course published, and induced many of the ignorant to believe implicitly in the man's innocence.

But to return to the condemned cell.

Shortly after eight we were admitted and as the door of the cell was thrown open I saw the figure of the doomed man standing with his back to the fireplace. He was dressed all in black, with white stockings and slippers. His face was livid and his eyes were bent to the ground as if he did not care to encounter the glances of strangers. Although he was comparatively composed, I could see that he was deeply affected. The governor addressed him as some dozen pressmen entered. "There are now present," he said, "A number of gentlemen from the Press. If you have any statement to make it will go through them to the public."

"I don't think I am now sufficiently composed," replied Hocker, "to do that now, sir. If I had known that they would be here, perhaps I might have done so." This was said in a very tremulous voice, and we saw that there was nothing to record further than a description of the last scene of all.

Calcraft now entered with the pinioning ropes in his hand. The wretched man then shuddered and closed his eyes. The whole of his form trembled and his face turned a pale blue. I saw that he was fainting. Just in time two of the warders rushed behind him, and he fell limp into their arms. He was placed in a chair and carried out into the chapel yard, where the murmur of the vast crowd outside could be distinctly heard. Never, indeed, since the execution of Greenacre and Courvoisier had there been such a concourse of people. The number was estimated at 12,000.

His neckcloth was removed and cold water dashed in his face, when he partially recovered, looking more like a corpse than an animated being. His energies were at last prostrated by mental agony. At this period a little wine was administered, and this helped him to recover, so that the pinioning could be finished.

Then the dismal chapel bell tolled, and again the horrified man shook like an aspen leaf and promised to collapse once again as the mournful procession moved slowly towards the apparatus of death, the doomed man being supported between two warders, and we bringing up the rear.

On arriving at the foot of the scaffold he seemed with a supreme effort to recover sufficient strength and ascended tolerably well. But the instant he got in sight of the populace again his nerve failed him, and Thompson, the turnkey, had to hold him by main force whilst the white cap was pulled over his face and the rope adjusted by Calcraft to the neck.

You could have heard a pin drop, and I could distinctly hear the chatter of the wretched fellow's teeth above the scraping of his feet upon the drop as the warders held him up to keep him from sinking all of a heap.

Whilst the noose was being adjusted he murmured, "Oh, God, receive my spirit. Oh, Lord, have mercy upon me!"

As the bolt was drawn Thompson reeled round and fainted right out, whilst the culprit disappeared, and met what at first seemed sudden death. But after a few seconds I could see a slight twitching of the rope, when all was still, Thomas Henry Hocker having paid the just penalty for the undoubted murder of poor De la Rue.

A Peculiar Conviction.

It has sometimes happened that a man who has committed a very atrocious crime has been executed for a circumstance attending the perpetration thereof, and of which in itself he was perfectly innocent. For example, it is on record that a servant who had attempted to murder his master (before the attempt to murder was made a capital offence, though, of course, it is not so now) by inflicting fifteen wounds upon his head and body with a hatchet was convicted and hanged, not for murder or attempted murder, but for burglary, because he had been obliged to lift up the latch of his master's door to get to his chamber.

Leaves from Our Notebook.

The Power of Extradition.

MANY people have the idea that if a criminal can only reach Spain he will be perfectly safe from arrest, and can snap his fingers at the detectives sent to secure them. This is not so; we have now with Spain, as with every civilised country, a treaty of extradition; though all offences are not extraditable. For instance, a man cannot be apprehended for civil faults, such as not paying his debts, in any of the European countries, but if he is guilty of a felony no State will protect him. Till comparatively recently criminals were secure from the operations of the English law if they could reach South American Republics; Argentina being the favourite retiring place for the guilty, but these have now completed arrangements with us, by which our prisoners are to be given up on demand, if there be reasonable probability of their guilt produced. The last State to fall into line as regards the exchange of suspects, was the ancient, though tiny Republic of San Marino. The fugitive from justice, then, must to-day seek some uncivilised country if he really is of sufficient importance for the Government to stir in the matter of his arrest. This led a collection of refugees to make a colony in the Bonin Islands, off the coast of Japan, where they were safe till quite recently, when the Japanese Government asserted its jurisdiction over the islands, and the community of rascals had to dissolve. An oasis in the Sahara, or a desert island in the South Pacific might afford an asylum from the offended majesty of the British law, but even there if our Government determined to capture the fugitive she would do so, though the process might be costly.

Refractory Juries.

IN theory the jury finds a verdict on the evidence before it, and its verdict is assumed to be a correct one, found without fear or favour. In practice this obtains to-day, but in the times of our forefathers, juries were not exempt from persecution or free from bribery. The infamous Star Chamber was far from averse to punishing juries whose findings were more honest than politic, and many a boxful of "twelve good men and true," have been plainly told that unless a verdict of guilty was returned they would be severely dealt with. In 1554, Queen Mary was so annoyed at the acquittal of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton that she was ill for three days. In the meantime the jurors were detained in prison. Then she took the matter in hand. Four submitted to her and were released, but the others were fined amounts varying from a thousand marks to as many pounds. Good Queen Bess also fined and imprisoned a jury for not finding a man guilty of treason contrary to the evidence. Judge Jeffreys, when Recorder, had a happy knack of fining juries whose verdicts did not suit him, and when the Quakers Penn and Mead were tried before him and the jury brought in a verdict of acquittal, he sent them back and locked them up without food or fire for a couple of days. As they still declined to give a false verdict he fined them forty marks, and when one Bushell refused to pay, he was sent to prison. Bushell appealed, and the Chief Justice released him and laid down the law that it was illegal to fine juries or to force them to return fancy verdicts. This was in 1670, and was the last time a jury was fined for contumacy.

Answers to Correspondents

The Editor will be pleased to answer any suitable questions.

JACKSON, A.—Edwin McDonald, a Life-guardsman, was murdered on September 29th, 1867. Is this the case you refer to?

S. B. (Dover).—Deden Redaines, a Dover crime, is in "active preparation," and will appear in due course. Glad you like the paper.

N. FOWLER (Leeds).—Justice shall be done to your town, and the case you inquire about described in due course. The murder of Mrs. Lifley occurred in 1859.

PORTIA.—Eliza Grimwood was found murdered at 11, Wellington Terrace, Waterloo Road. These houses were only built in 1818. We shall give an account of this crime.

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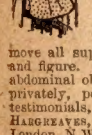

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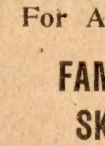

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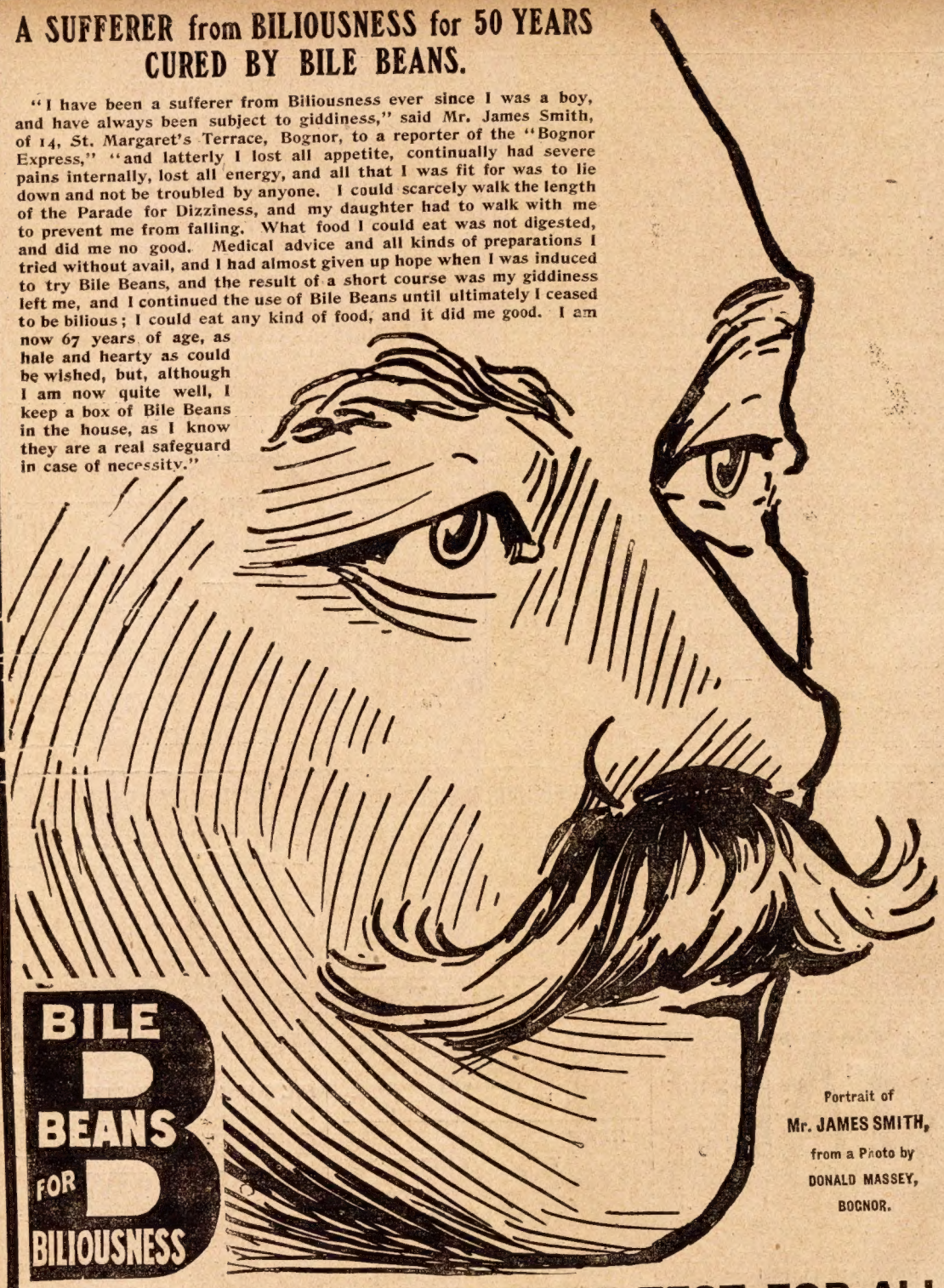

Portrait of
Mr. JAMES SMITH,
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